



# Singing to the Cat

A Full English translation is available.

唱歌給貓聽

**Author:** Tom Liu (Liu Chen-Kuo) **Illustrator:** Tom Liu (Liu Chen-Kuo) **Publisher:** Global Kids

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**Adaptation:** Wind band music **Rights sold:** Korean

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Lya Shaffer

Mr. Dululu, a pianist with a strict daily routine, always goes to bed at exactly eleven o'clock. But tonight, a cat has climbed onto the roof of his apartment, and its persistent meowing has broken the peaceful silence of the night. So, Mr. Dululu gets out of bed and begins to play a lullaby on the piano to soothe the cat to sleep.

As he plays and sings, drowsiness sets in—but to his surprise, instead of calming the cat, his song only makes it more energetic. Soon, even more cats come bouncing and pouncing toward the sound. Meanwhile, one hundred sardines join in the fun.

Four-time Feng Zikai Chinese Children's Picture Book Award winner Tom Liu draws inspiration from the Spanish children's song *There Was Once a Mr. Cat (Señor Don Gato)* to create a playful "story within a story." Set to the familiar tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, it's both readable and singable—perfect for interactive storytime. Liu's bold, bright color blocks, geometric shapes, and sleek minimalist lines bring vibrant humor to every page, pulsing with musical rhythm and movement for a joyful feast for the eyes and ears.



Author **Tom Liu** (Liu Chen-Kuo)

Born in Taipei in 1966, Tom Liu (Liu Chen-Kuo) leads a humble, orderly life and has a particular interest in simple forms. His major works include *It's Raining*, *The Scariest Day of My Life*, *Granny Lin's Peach Tree*, *Calder the Artist*, *Kung Fu Frog River Lake*, *The One-Sided Painter*, *Who Wants to Play Hide and Seek?*, and *Knock! Knock! Here Comes The Dinosaur!* He has received numerous awards, including the Taipei International Book Exhibition "Exhibition Award," the White Raven Award from the International Youth Library in Germany, the Golden Tripod Award for Best Illustration, the Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award, the "Good Books for All" Annual Best Youth Literature Award, and the Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award. He has also been selected for the Bologna Illustrators Exhibition in Italy.

# Innocence and the Spirit of Childhood Innovation: Exploring Tom Liu's Picture Book Aesthetics

by Wu Wen-Chun  
(originally published on OKAPI)

Taiwanese picture book artist Tom Liu (Liu Chen-Kuo) comes from a background in sculpture. His unique artistic style—marked by bold geometric forms, visual simplicity, and a quirky sense of humor—translates beautifully into storytelling for children. His picture books are filled with playful, organic elements that spark laughter and joy, inviting young readers into a realm of innocence and wonder. Each book becomes a rich journey of the heart and imagination.

The beloved Chinese children's literature expert Lin Liang once said, "The fundamental job of illustrations in

*a picture book is to tell a story. A child flipping through a picture book should be able to understand the story even without reading the words. That's what makes an illustration truly competent... I try to categorize picture book illustrators into two kinds: those who depict vivid realism, and those who create wonder for children."*

Tom Liu's work clearly falls into the latter category. His illustrations do far more than complement the text—they *tell* the story and consistently create wonder. His picture books are infused with a childlike spirit of innovation,

often exploring themes that resonate with young readers in unexpected and thoughtful ways. His earlier book *Alike or Not Alike* explores philosophical and aesthetic questions such as "How do we perceive beauty?" and "Is there a right way to see something?" Rather than offering rigid definitions, it invites readers to explore through playfulness, curiosity, and open-ended discovery—much like the way children naturally learn about the world.

One of Tom Liu's recent works, *Singing to the Cat*, is inspired by the Spanish folk song *Señor Don Gato* and reimagined using the familiar melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. The result is a charming lullaby-story hybrid, both sweet and whimsical, perfect for bedtime. The lyrics, written by the character Mr. Dululu the pianist, are tender and musical, while the pacing of the story mirrors the gentle rhythm of a lullaby. The book can be read or sung, offering a multi-sensory experience that engages both sight and sound—much like listening to Mozart's *Twinkle Variations*.

In *Singing to the Cat*, Liu expands his visual language even further. His characters are drawn with clean, simple lines and expressive gestures. The color palette is vibrant yet balanced, and the illustrations are full of warmth, humor, and imagination. The story itself is pure and

enchanting, filled with wit, charm, and a free-spirited sense of creativity. It reads like a modern nursery rhyme—a soothing, joyful song for both cats and kids, destined to be read (or sung) repeatedly, like a beloved tune from a music box.

A great picture book is like a living child: full of vitality, innocence, and freedom. It breaks free from constraints, strips away the unnecessary, and leaves behind space for imagination to flourish. Tom Liu's work exemplifies this spirit. His diverse subject matter and ever-evolving artistic style demonstrate a deep respect for children's creativity. By seeing through the eyes of a child, he recaptures the brilliance of pure-hearted wonder and brings readers along for the ride.

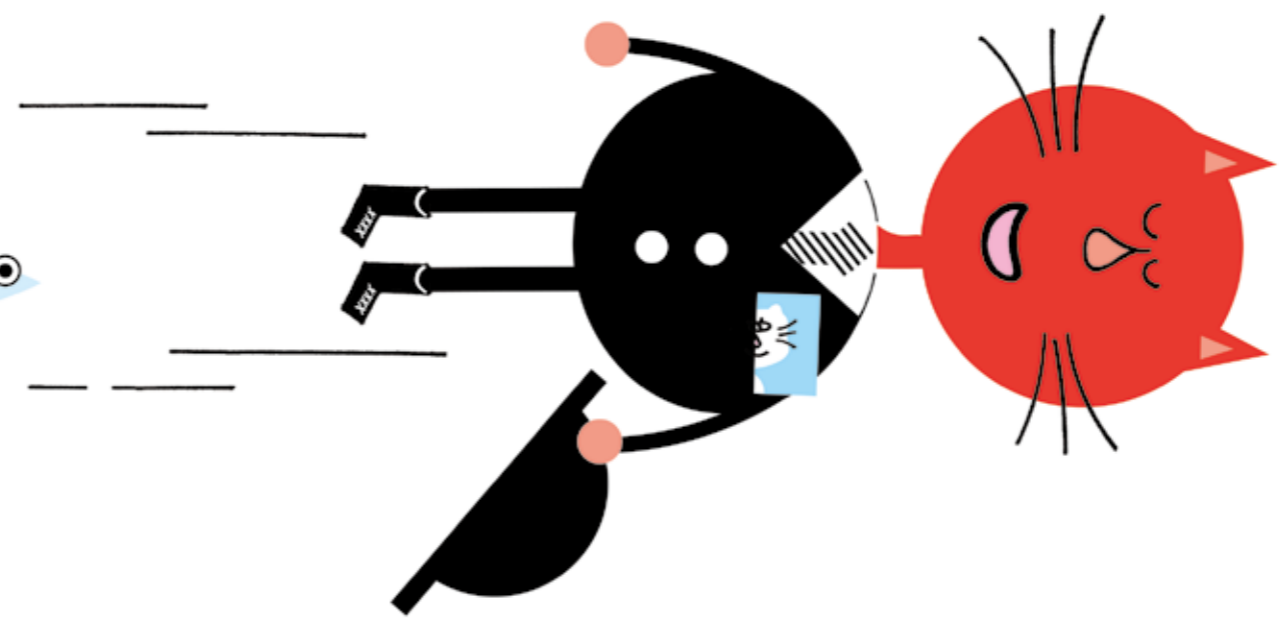
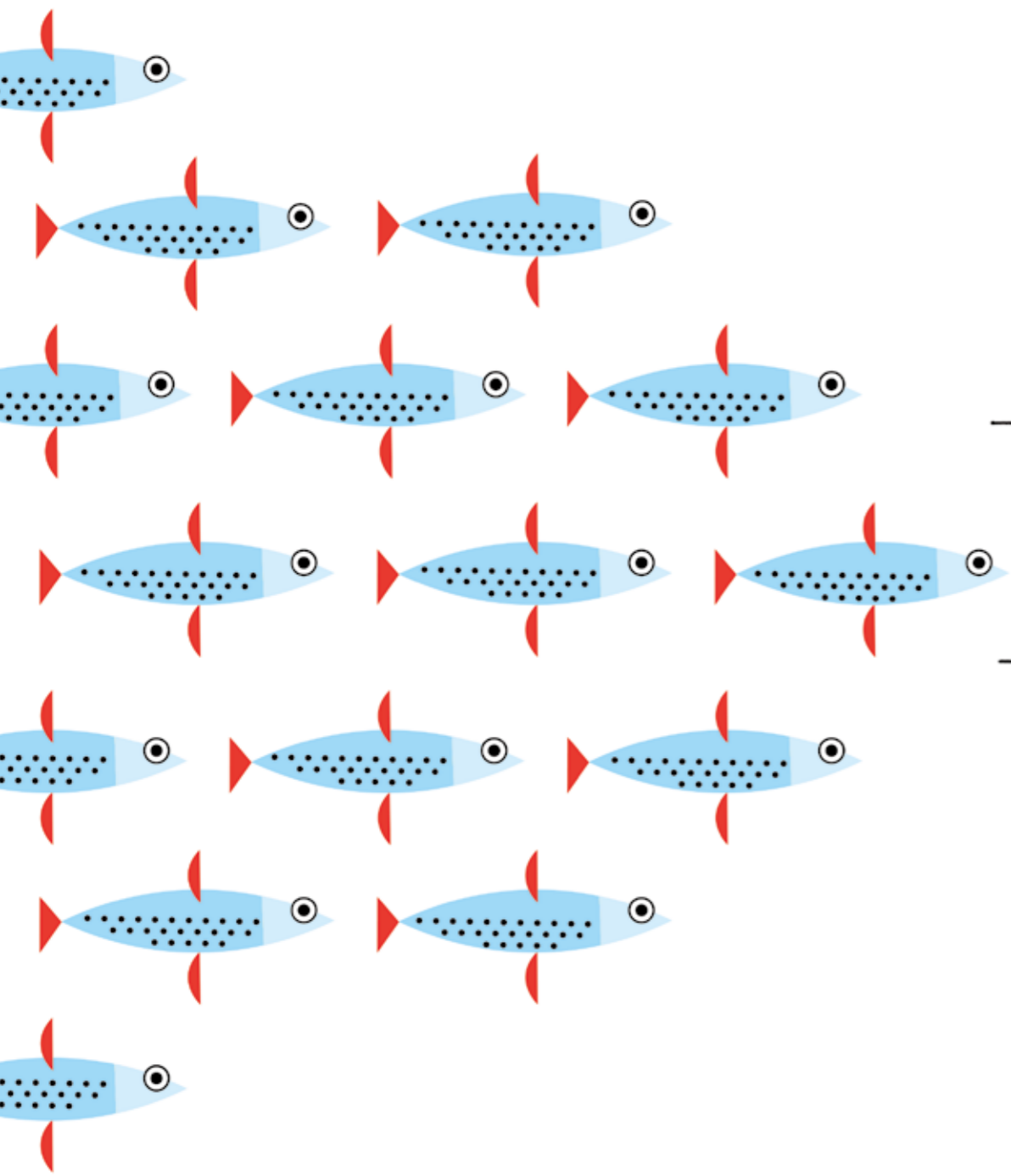
Behind his seemingly simple stories and drawings lies something much deeper—the spirit of childhood innovation, expressed with humor, heart, and endless imagination.

*Wu Wen-Chun is a writer and a passionate advocate for picture book aesthetics and literature. She is a regular picture book columnist and freelance editor, and formerly served as chief editor of image3. Deeply inspired by novels, poetry, film, painting, and writing, she weaves these into her daily life. In the adult world, she strives to hold onto a child's heart and a vivid imagination.*



♪ Rock-a rock-a rockabye,  
Birds and flowers close their eyes,  
  
Rock-a rock-a rockabye,  
Ocean calm and quiet sky...

TEMPURA



♪ One two three four five six seven—  
A gift of sardines for his bride...

But the cat still won't fall asleep!

Mr. Dululu sings more loudly and urgently:

- Please sleep, please sleep, Mister Cat!  
I will help you count sardines.

