

MEET THE CREATOR



Marg Gibbs

Thanks for sharing your creative journey with us. Are you a children's book writer, an illustrator or both?

Hi. My name is Marg, short for Margaret. I am not related to author May Gibbs. I love to write children's stories and poems, sometimes illustrating them with collage.

Have you recently or are you expecting to release a new book that you would like to talk about today?

My latest release is ***Backpacks & Paper Planes – travel poems for kids***. It is self-published and contains 38 fun poems of action and travel, from dirt bike riding, bus, train rides, skateboarding, and flying in an aeroplane to an African safari trip. The illustrations are mostly black and white from Canberra's Peter Sheehan to freelancers overseas.

Most children today carry a backpack on their journeys for holidays, school, or hiking. I remember the days of packing and sorting my own backpack; similarly, young readers can sort through poems to read on their trips, choose the ones they like and return again to others that might be relevant.

The collection can be read for ages 4 to 74, with a long list of exciting places to visit and things to do at the back of the book. Have you ever cycled a rickshaw in Bangladesh, rode in a sleigh pulled by a reindeer in Finland or hopped on a tram in Melbourne?

To celebrate this new book, we are inviting kids to fold and make their own paper plane to fly and decorate a backpack. There will be a video, speakers and prizes.

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Purchase at www.mjgibbs.com.au

Cost \$24

BACKPACKS AND *PAPER PLANES*



Kid's travel poems



M J GIBBS

Can you share the book's publication journey?

The book's journey started with the idea of travelling, moving, and making memories. I sat down to list all the means of transport, from camel rides to travel on trains. These days, families and kids travel long and short distances from home to fascinating places.

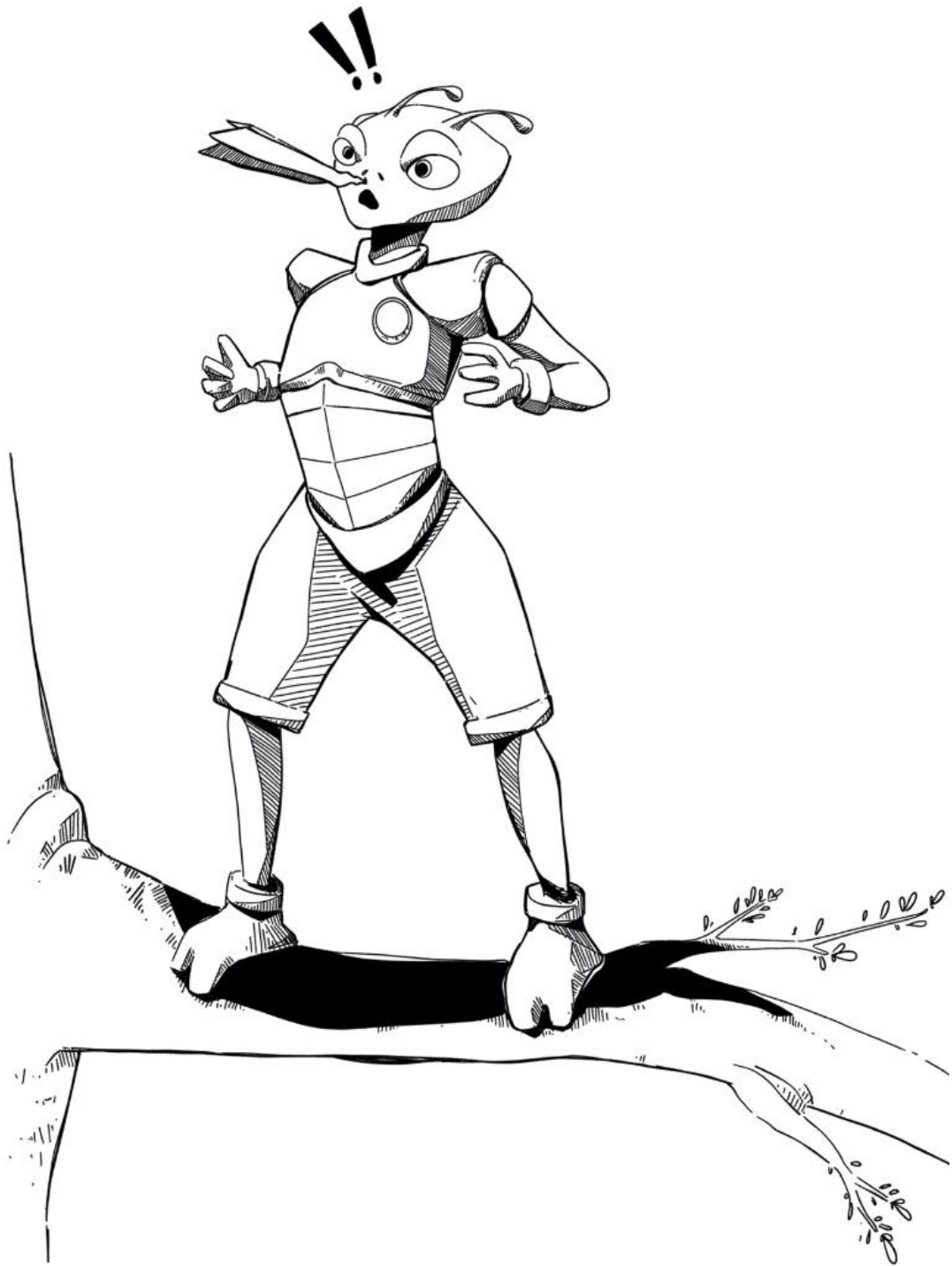
The poems took about 5 months of work and edits. I tested some out with friends, a sister, and my writing buddy. An editor in Melbourne suggested a few changes.

To market and promote the books, I have articles featured in the local Sunshine Coast news. Competitions at the book launch and an invited guest speaker from QAM, Caloundra, Mr Gary Hills, to speak about wings and their importance when flying. Elijah Grant, a Senior student, will demonstrate his way of repurposing old bikes into new ones. Elijah owns and rides his 2004 Toyota Hilux Ute. How cool!

My sister Kim made a trailer. I have badges, postcards, and bookmarks ready for give-a-ways. And sitting next to my book are model aeroplanes, a London bus, and an alien (see below)

Families tell me at the local markets they still want to read aloud to their children. What better form than a poem, a surprise gift, an expression of feeling, or a spark of imagination to share with a loved one?

The various illustrators were given a brief, followed by a couple of lines from the poem to sketch. They were professional, prompt and reasonably priced. I did plan to have the middle colour section feature a young artist from Bangladesh. The spread is easy on the eye with a textured, painted digital look.



"A Paper Plane crashed into me! Help. An alien in a tree."

What sort of stories are you inspired to write for children?

I love to write stories based on real-life family situations, animals, working together or persistence.

How many hours do you commit to your craft each day? Do you have a regular routine?

Writing is something I factor in every day; even on a holiday, I will pack my computer to tap out words. The only time I do not write properly is around lunch and early afternoon when my motivation and energy levels are down.

Did you have a standout teacher who helped with your writing/illustrating and what did they do to inspire you?

My art teacher at secondary school really inspired me. She beamed enthusiasm, joy, and a passion for all things art. She inspired me with encouragement, compliments, and her love of the subject matter.

Why did you decide to become a children's author/illustrator?

I guess I find children upfront, truthful, daring, and joyful. They share their emotions on their sleeves. They are funny and silly, soaking up new learning experiences. Children's books are like delicious milkshakes with extra froth on the top! Being a children's author is exciting.

Would you like to share something unique about yourself?

When I was a child, I could walk on stilts. As a mother, I drove a car. Now, as a grandma, I dance and skip backwards out the driveway to say goodbye to the families. (a secret happy ritual) But it was my bicycle that came with me everywhere when growing up.

Do you have any advice for people hoping to become a children's author/illustrator?

Persist. Read. Ask questions. Listen to a role model. Read and write.

Where can we find you?

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I have a poem, *Tooth of a Dragon Spell* and story, *The Magic Treasure Box*, included in **It's a Kind of Magic** (Anthology Angels) published in October 2022 for the Halloween Storytelling and Book Launch.