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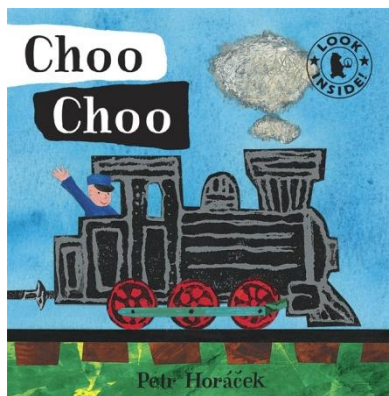
# Author Focus

# Petr Horáček

Petr Horáček has produced a growing list of appealing picture books with thoughtful themes and imaginative board books.
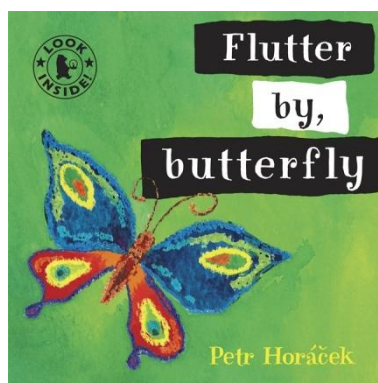
## Board Books

### Choo Choo
Walker 9781406325065

In this board book with pages shaped like hills and mountains as a backdrop, a steam train makes its way from town to seaside with cheerful child passengers aboard. On the left page are onomatopoeic repeated sounds 'Clack clack', 'Rumble rumble' while on the right the stages of the journey 'through the woods' 'over the bridge', are printed on pictures which give strong cues, including a cutaway hole when the train enters a tunnel.
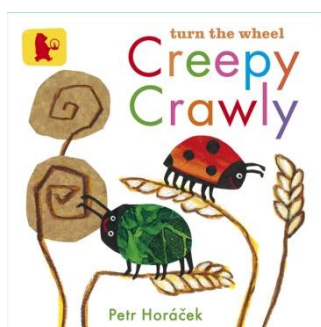
### Flutter By, Butterfly (Look Inside)
Walker 9781406325072

Beginning with a butterfly, turn the gradually diminishing pages to reveal a cheerful collection of minibeasts, each introduced in alliterative or rhyming language, until we come full circle and meet an early incarnation of our first friend, a 'crunching munching caterpillar!'. The clever cutaway pages reveal him in a rainbow of colours.
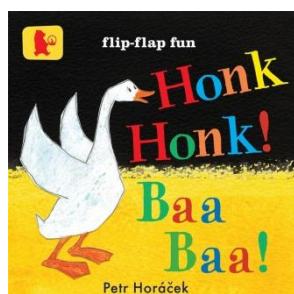
*Creepy Crawly* (Turn the Wheel)
Walker 9781406329674

Strategically cut holes change beetles into cabbages and flowers into snail shells in this invitation to see insects in action. Take part by turning the wheel on the end page to make the brightly coloured butterflies flutter over the meadow.
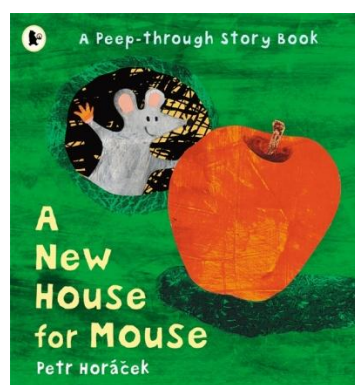
*Honk Honk! Baa Baa!* (Flip-Flap Fun)
Walker 9781406343755

A delightful introduction to noises made by a variety of animals including one that looks suspiciously like his Silly Suzy Goose character. As the cutaway pages are turned a picture of a cow is surreptitiously revealed.
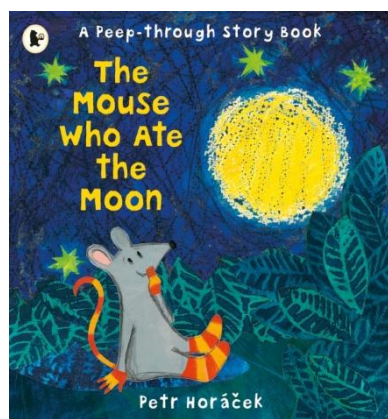
## Picture Books

*A New House for Mouse*
Walker 9781406301229

A mouse peers out of her hole one day and spies a huge apple. The search is on to find a hole that can accommodate both her and this delicious food. She approaches several but each already has an occupant and there is no room. A cutaway hole in the page allows a view of the inside of each abode. An enjoyable patterned and repetitive text which contains echoes of fairy tales such as *The Enormous Turnip* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.
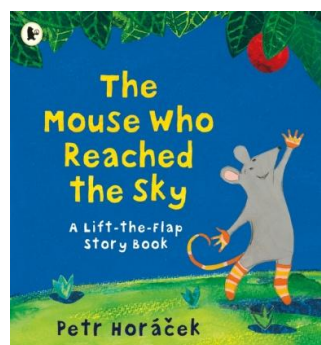
![CLPE logo]

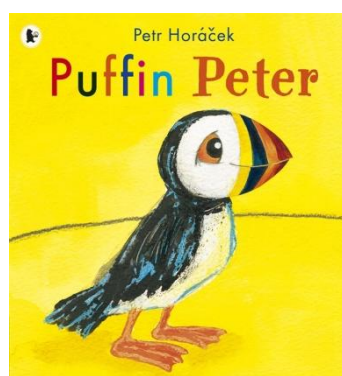### The Mouse Who Ate the Moon
Walker 9781406360677

Little Mouse is sad because she believes that she has eaten a piece of the moon that she finds outside her hole, having admired it when she gazed at it in the night sky. No matter what her friends Mole and Rabbit say, her anxiety grows, until night falls again and she can see the moon is whole, shining in the sky. Children will understand from the pictures what Little Mouse has really eaten, even though it is never named in the text.

### The Mouse Who Reached the Sky
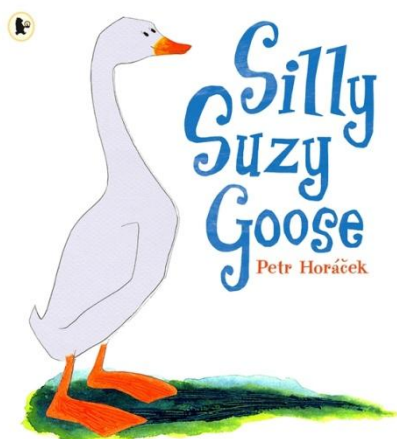Walker 9781406365631

Little Mouse, Mole and Rabbit all have different ideas about what the red shiny object hanging from a tree is. They collaborate to find out the truth, depicted in a lovely fold out page, only to discover that none of them had the right answer!

### Puffin Peter
 Walker 9781406337761

 'Two little dicky birds' Peter and Paul are separated during a big storm. Peter searches for his friend over oceans and on islands, his epic journey depicted in glowing mixed media illustrations. He describes Paul to each successive creature that he meets but never thinks to mention the obvious fact which would help others to identify him.
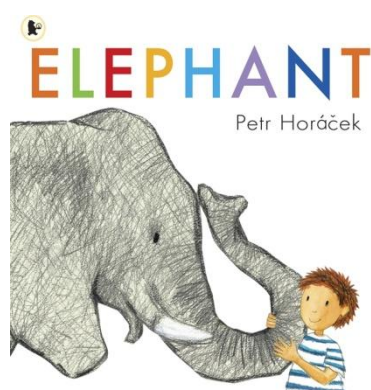
### Silly Suzy Goose
Walker 9781406304589

Suzy Goose wishes she was different from all the other geese. She considers trying out the movements and sounds of a range of other animals. Eventually she draws the unwelcome attention of a lion when she attempts to imitate his roar and finds out that she can carry out some of the moves other animals make in her rush to escape! This distinctive character appears in some further adventures:
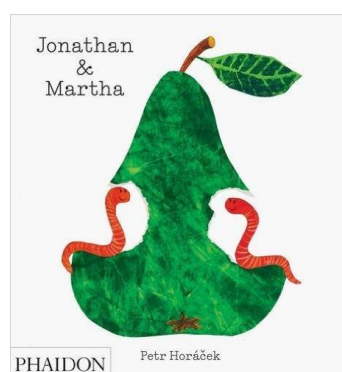*Look Out, Suzy Goose* Walker 9781406317640
*Suzy Goose and the Christmas Star* Walker 9781406326215

### Elephant
Walker 9781406324419

His grandparents are too busy to play with him, so a boy finds fun and adventures with his elephant instead. However, the elephant makes a mess and the serenely smiling grandparents don't seem to believe he exists, although the perfectly paced denouement reveals a delightful cross-generational imaginative complicity.
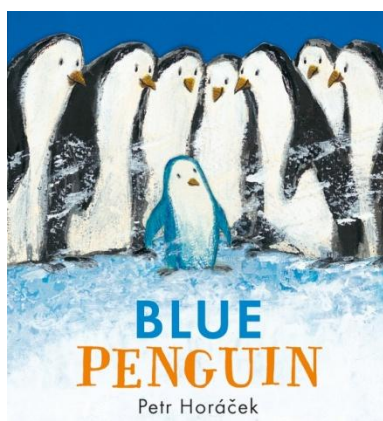
### Jonathan and Martha
Phaidon 9780714863511

Jonathan and Martha are worms who are both chomping their way through a pear from opposite sides. When they meet in the middle, they fight and become so tangled up with each other that they have no choice but to share. The intervention of a big hungry bird leads to their physical separation, then they discover that now they truly want to share their lives.
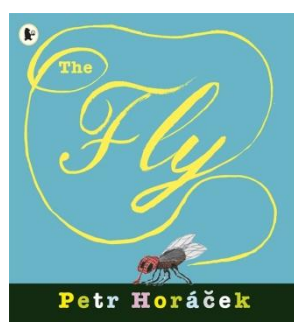
### Blue Penguin
Walker 9781406358285

Petr Horáček's most philosophical picture book yet, focusing on themes around identity and belonging. Blue Penguin is not accepted by his community because he looks different from them. In his lonely dreams he envisions a white whale which moves him to make up a song. Its spiritual quality leads Blue Penguin to friendship and the inspiration to create a new song that everyone can share. The textured illustrations with a colour palette focused on blue and white perfectly evoke the mysticism of the snowy landscape.

### The Fly
Walker 9781406330731

A fly feels he is leading a blameless life so why does everyone want to swat him? The world is seen from the fly's angle as he buzzes through the pages, the text weaving its way with him or contained in speech bubbles. The end reveals that the fly feels he is in danger from us, the readers, too.

## Short Novel

### Leon Spreads His Wings by Wendy Lee.
Walker 9781406307153

Petr Horáček contributes warm black and white drawings to this well-shaped story. Leon is afraid of flying which prevents him travelling to Jamaica, where his dad comes from, going to Egypt for a holiday, or visiting his Auntie Gwen, Uncle Pablo and baby cousin Jorge, who live in Spain. The story of how he overcomes his fear is told in three episodes, at the end of each of which Leon writes to his teacher about his experiences.