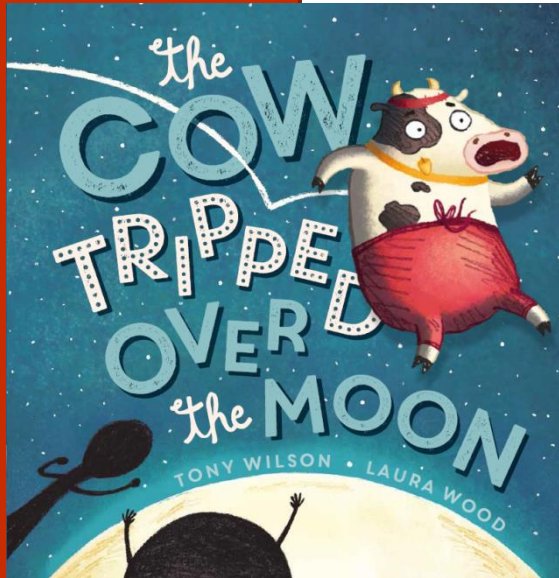


# THE COW TRIPPED OVER THE MOON

TONY WILSON | LAURA WOOD (Illustrator)



*Hey diddle diddle  
You all know the riddle,  
A cow jumps over the moon...*

We all know the cow that jumped over the moon. But did you know the story behind the brave bovine? Cow is determined to jump over the moon. But it seems the harder she tries, the harder she falls! With the support of her friends the cat, the fiddle, the dish, the spoon and the little dog, will Cow finally make that fateful leap? With themes of friendship and perseverance, this is the classic nursery rhyme, just not as you imagined it!

**From the Author:** **The Cow Tripped Over the Moon** is a story about perseverance. I love seeing people practice a skill, especially a difficult skill, and do it so many times that eventually it becomes easy. I see it in my older two kids, Polly, 8, and Harry, 5, with things like cartwheels, kicking a footy or learning to read.

But I dedicated **The Cow Tripped Over the Moon** to my three year old, Jack. Jack has cerebral palsy, a condition that causes muscle spasticity in all four of his limbs. He also has cortical vision impairment, which means he only sees a couple of metres. Everything that Jack tries to do requires perseverance. He cannot walk by himself, or crawl, or sit for very long. Every day he practises these things, and gets tiny improvements to keep us going. When Jack's in his walking frame, we chant each movement to help him: 'shift weight, step, stretch and push'. If he wants to pick up a piece of pasta at dinner, Jack might make ten attempts with his slightly better left hand. Then, finally, he gets his pasta.

Jack is such a beautiful and brave boy. He tries so hard to learn skills that are difficult for him. When he's tired and grumpy he'll say that he doesn't want to do any more, but he'll always have another go the next day. Jack is only three, but he's my inspiration.

Jack is also the inspiration for **The Cow Tripped Over the Moon**. I wanted to create a character who, like Jack, never gives up. 'Hey Diddle Diddle' is my favourite nursery rhyme to sing — I think the image of a cow jumping over the moon is so romantic, and the two things combined to make this book.

My first attempt at writing this story was much longer. I wrote a manuscript for a middle grade reader called 'The Cowlympics'. It featured a young cow competing at the bovine sports carnival of the year. The main event is, of course, the Open Age Moon Jump. The story was meant to be an against-the-odds sports story, a bit like 'The 27th Annual African Hippopotamus Race'. It was okay, but maybe just missed the mark. I read through my first draft and thought, 'this would be better as just a series of attempts on the moon'.

It didn't take long to write the text. Maybe two days or so. Once I had the idea and the format the words came easily. My favourite line is 'It seems a moon clearance /Takes great perseverance.'

My other favourite line is the dedication: 'To my darling Jack. You will jump moons.'

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## DISCUSSION NOTES

- In **The Cow Tripped Over the Moon**, Cow's goal is to jump over the moon. What do you think it means to have a goal? What kind of goals do you have? Make a list of all your goals. Decide what your most important goals are, then draw a picture of yourself achieving them.

- Talk to your parent or carer about the goals they have achieved in their lives. What steps did they take to achieve it? How long did it take? Did they feel like giving up? Ask them for their tips on achieving goals.
- Sometimes it takes perseverance to achieve a goal. What does it mean to persevere? Think about a time when you had to persevere to achieve a goal. Did you ever feel like giving up? In one illustration, Cow is persevering in her goal to jump over the moon, but she has tears in her eyes. Why might she be persevering even if it is making her upset?
- Cow's friends help her in her efforts to jump over the moon. How are friends important in achieving goals? Think about a time when a friend or family member helped you achieve something. Write them a note to say thank you.
- Cow is the main character in the story, but the reader doesn't know much about her. Why do you think she might be trying to jump over the moon? Make up your own story about Cow, and why she decided to jump over the moon.
- Cow has to practise a lot before she finally makes it over the moon. Why is it important to practise to become good at something? Would you do anything differently if you were training to jump over the moon, like Cow? Talk about the type of training or practising you and your family do for hobbies, like sport or music.
- **The Cow Tripped Over the Moon** is based on a nursery rhyme. What is a nursery rhyme? Why is it called a 'nursery' rhyme? What are some of your favourite nursery rhymes? (eg 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', 'Bye Baby Bunting', 'Little Miss Muffet'). Talk with your parents or carers about the nursery rhymes they liked when they were children. Are they the same ones that you know and like?
- The book features a cow, a cat and a dog, all domesticated animals. What does it mean for an animal to be domesticated, as opposed to wild? Can any animal be domesticated? Why do humans need domesticated animals?

Does your family have any pets? What other domesticated animals have you seen? (eg dog, cat, cow, rabbit, sheep)

- Have a look at the patterns on the endpapers of the book — they are artistically representing a farm. What do you think each of the patterns represent? Talk about the techniques the artist has used to illustrate the landscape and have a go at painting or drawing your own landscape using patterns.