

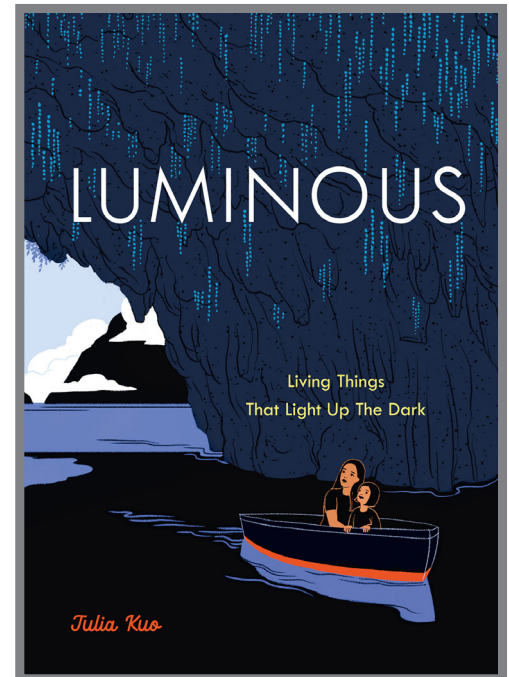
Luminous: Living Things That Light Up The Dark

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
JULIA KUO

SCIS: 5421841

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Where does light come from? What if our bodies could create light?

In *Luminous*, author/illustrator Julia Kuo encourages young readers to explore and engage with the world of bioluminescence. Take an imaginative dive into the dark forests and ocean depths to discover living things that glow from the inside and the way they use their bodies to eat, to protect and to delight.

The simple prose invites readers to be curious and ask questions about the world around them, while informative paragraphs provide additional facts about the animals and creatures that live in the deep dark.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Julia Kuo is a Taiwanese-American author/illustrator who has worked with the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. She has illustrated numerous picture books, including *Let's Do Everything and Nothing*, and has taught illustration courses at Columbia College Chicago and Washington University in St Louis. She has been an artist-in-residence twice at the Banff Centre for the Arts and was a 2019–2021 fellow with the Gray Centre for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago. She is interested in discovering and illustrating the natural world.

THEMES

- Light and dark
- Curiosity
- Ocean animals
- Sources of light
- Luminescence

STUDY NOTES

- *Luminous* is a gentle introduction to bioluminescence, but also to nonfiction books more broadly. Discuss what makes a book nonfiction, and how writers use creative writing to keep readers interested.
- How does it feel to read the main story without any of the facts? How do the facts change the type of book this is?
- Can facts be creative? Sometimes we just need to change the way we look at or present information to make it sound more interesting. Choose an animal that interests you and write down ten facts about it. Write each fact on a separate line on paper that you can cut up. Cut along each line so that you can move them around, and experiment with the order of your facts. How does changing the order of your facts change the way you read it? Which way do you like best?

- Write a haiku about your chosen animal—a haiku is a poem written in three lines. The first line has five syllables, the second has seven syllables, the third has five syllables. Draw a picture of your animal to accompany your poem.
- The creator, Julia Kuo, captures the full impact of bioluminescence using the contrast between light and dark, and black and colour. Draw a picture of somewhere familiar to you. Now use colour to show what it might look like in the dark.
- Draw a creature that you imagine you might find in the dark. What does it look like? How does it use light to survive?
- You might find a lot of new and unfamiliar words in the book. Some of them are highlighted in italics. Use these words to start a new vocabulary list and add any other words that are unfamiliar as you read. Look them up and write down the meaning. Choose two and use each one in a new sentence.
- Go on a night walk. Take a torch (and an adult) and go on a night walk around your neighbourhood. Draw a map of the places you walk, and write or draw the things you see that look or sound different at night.

Comprehension

- What is light? Where does it come from?
- What is the difference between a natural light source and a human-made light source? Can you come up with an example of each?
- What does bioluminescence mean?
- What is your favourite fact in the book? Why?
- What is the difference between fact and fiction? Can you identify which parts of the story are fact and which are fiction? How can you tell?
- What are some of the different things that the creatures in the book use light for?
- What is the opposite of light?
- What are some of the negative effects of too much human-made light on places?