Animation production cel set-up for *The Man Who Yelled*, 1990

Student project at NYU, Tisch School of the Arts
Ink and cel paint on acetate
Collection of the artist

Animation production cel set-up for "Sharks," 1994

Going, Going, Almost Gone! Animals in Danger, 1995
Produced by the Mo Willems Studio for HBO
Ink and cel paint on acetate with colored pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Animation production cel set-up for "Suzie Kabloozie and the Telephone," ca. 1995

Sesame Street, first aired in Episode #3434, 1996
Produced by the Mo Willems Studio for Children's
Television Workshop
Ink and cel paint on acetate with mixed media on paper
Collection of the artist

Animation production cel set-up for "Small Octopus on Your Head," 1994

Sesame Street, first aired in Episode #3351, 1995
Produced by the Mo Willems Studio for Children's
Television Workshop
Ink and cel paint on acetate with colored pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Production background for "Agony of De-bleat," ca. 2000

Sheep in the Big City, Season 1, Episode 8
Produced by Curious Pictures for Cartoon Network
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems directed the design of the New York-like background cityscape for *Sheep in the Big City,* his animated series that aired on Cartoon Network from 2000 to 2002. The show features a sheep named Sheep, who flees his farm home for the Big City when the military identifies him as fuel for a sheep-powered ray gun.

"Small Octopus on Your Head," 1995

Runtime 0:37
Sesame Street, first aired in Episode 3351
Courtesy of Sesame Workshop

"Be Still My Bleating Heart" (excerpts), 2000

Runtime 1:45
Sheep in the Big City, Season 1, Episode 1
Courtesy of The Cartoon Network, Inc.

Mo Willems (b. 1968), writer and artist; Richard Starkings (b. 1962), letterer; Lee Loughridge, colorist

"Walking the Williamsburg Bridge to Work"

9-11: The World's Finest Comic Book Writers and Artists Tell Stories to Remember
New York: DC Comics, 2002
New-York Historical Society

Willems narrates his personal experience of 9/11 in this graphic short story. His daughter Trixie, who would become the model for the central character in the Knuffle Bunny trilogy, appears as an infant. The story closes with the emotional reassurance of family amid a chaotic world.

Final illustration for
"And those were the first words . . . ," 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustrations for
"Trixie helped her daddy . . . " and *"She even got to put the money . . . ,"* 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for
"She went boneless," 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Red pencil on paper
Private collection

In the first Knuffle Bunny book, toddler Trixie is wise beyond her years, but her vocabulary is not. She realizes that her beloved Knuffle Bunny was left behind at the laundromat, but all she can do is frantically wave her arms and say, "Aggle flaggle klabble!" Dad replies, "That's right. We're going home." A tantrum ensues. The comedy of miscommunication unveils the intense bonds between child, parents, and reunited stuffed animal.

Willems based the story on an episode from his own parenting experience. The published illustrations feature black-and-white photograph backgrounds that he shot in his family's neighborhood of Park Slope, Brooklyn. Settings include Prospect Park, PS 107, and the Sixth Avenue Laundromat.

Browsing copies of picture books by Mo Willems are in the gallery's reading corner.

Final illustration for
"The morning did not go well," 2006

Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"We have your bunny," 2006

Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Now in pre-kindergarten, Trixie takes her special Knuffle Bunny to school, only to discover that a rival bunny exists—brought by classmate Sonja. In the middle of the night, both girls realize they've taken the wrong one home. An exchange takes place under Grand Army Plaza's Triumphal Arch, and friendship is won.

Achieving friendship is a common theme in Willems' picture books, but he never forwards pat answers. He often imbues his characters with the realism of messy interior struggles.

Final illustration for *"She was big enough,"* 2009

Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

The trilogy finale centers on the process of growing up, and the maturity of letting go. The family travels to Holland—where Willems' own parents are from—to visit relatives. Trixie forgets Knuffle Bunny on the plane, but eventually overcomes her distress. On the airplane ride back, she fortuitously finds her stuffed animal. In this illustration, she selflessly offers it to a baby who had been crying.

Final cover illustration, 2002

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"Let's play 'Drive the Bus'!" 2002

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems often says he wants his books to be "played"—to provoke deep engagements with readers. His first picture book, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, opens with a bus driver instructing the reader not to let the Pigeon drive the bus. The childlike Pigeon arrives and tries to convince the reader to let him drive the bus, imaginatively responding to the reader's ostensible "no" after "no."

The book's first incarnation appeared in the 1998 edition of the "Mo Willems Sketchbook," an annual booklet of cartoons and doodles that Willems sends to clients and friends. The Pigeon was inspired by a real pigeon that Willems had seen and begun doodling while on a writing trip in Oxford, England, the previous year.

Final illustration for *"Needs mustard,"* 2003

The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"Is that a hot dog?"* 2003

The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Pigeon, thrilled to find a hot dog, is about to eat it when Duckling, petite and doe-eyed, walks up and hints that Pigeon might share it with her. After much excuse-making, Pigeon happily relents.

One of Willems' goals is to make his drawings appear effortless and simple enough for children to copy on their own, much in the way that Charles Schulz inspired him when he was a child.

Final illustration for
"Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!" 2010

The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2012
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final cover illustration, 2010

The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2012
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"So, you get a cookie with nuts . . . ," 2010

The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2012
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Duckling gets a cookie by asking politely. An incredulous Pigeon, who is often told "no," is driven topsy-turvy when recounting all the ways he doesn't get what he wants, and overwhelms Duckling and cookie with his "NO." Typography and lettering are critical components of Willems' picture books, and the graphic power of the "NO" underscores the strength of Pigeon's emotions.

Variations in lettering and punctuation, from strident yells to miniscule whispers, encourage readers to modulate their voices when reading aloud, enhancing the books' "playability."

Final illustration for *"A PUPPY!"* 2007

The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008
Aquarelle pencil and red pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"I've changed my mind,"* 2007

The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008
Aquarelle pencil and red pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

In *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!* Willems zeroes in on the essence of a child's exuberant yearning. Pigeon's pleading for a puppy finally works, but he quickly discovers it's more than he bargained for.

Bird Line, n.d.

Wire
Collection of the artist

Elephant Line, n.d.

Wire
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"A funny clown!"* 2006

My Friend Is Sad (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *Smiling*, 2006

My Friend Is Sad (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Like a classic comedy duo, much of the humor of Elephant and Piggie derives from physical and temperamental contrasts, and situational irony. In *My Friend Is Sad*, the second book in the series, Piggie sees that Gerald the elephant is depressed and tries to cheer him up by dressing in funny costumes. Nothing has lasting effect until Gerald sees Piggie without a costume. Not realizing she was behind it all, he relays the characters he saw. In the illustration where Gerald is bawling, he in fact is telling Piggie he saw "A funny clown!"

Final illustration for *"We do want to play catch with you. But . . . ,"* 2008

Can I Play Too? (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2010
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"Bonk! Bonk! Bonk!"* 2008

Can I Play Too? (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2010
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"The Reader said . . . , " 2009

We Are in a Book! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2010
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"This book is going too fast!" 2009

We Are in a Book! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2010
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
Two Hippos and Rhino, 2009

I Broke My Trunk! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2011
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"You broke your trunk . . . , " 2009

I Broke My Trunk! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2011
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"Blarggie! Blarggie!"* 2008

Cat the Cat, Who Is That?
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"Blarggie! Blarggie!"* 2008

Cat the Cat, Who Is That?
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for *"Blarggie! Blarggie!"* 2013

Cat the Cat, Who Is That?
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers

Geared to the emergent reader, Cat the Cat's key ingredients are repetition and limited, simple vocabularies. To offset the word restrictions, Willems renders the characters with crisp, bright expressiveness. He plays with sounds in the text not just as a didactic exercise, but simply because they're fun, as in the case of a monster who says, "Blarggie! Blarggie!"

The naming formula behind the characters (Cat the Cat, Duck the Duck, and so on) fulfills the repetition agenda, but it's a gag that Willems has used before: the "sheep named Sheep" of his *Sheep in the Big City* animated series, and Piggie the pig from the Elephant and Piggie books.

Final illustration for *"ZOOM!"* 2008

Let's Say Hi to Friends Who Fly!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *Rhino in Plane*, 2008

Let's Say Hi to Friends Who Fly!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for *"Time to sleep, Horse the Horse!"* 2009

Time to Sleep, Sheep the Sheep!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for
"I'll be your best friend!" 2013

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Hyperion Books for Children

Preliminary sketch for
"I'll be your best friend!" ca. 2002

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Graphite, red pencil, and printed and pasted text on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"Too many toys,"* 2012

The Pigeon Needs a Bath!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for *"Too many toys,"* 2012

The Pigeon Needs a Bath!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Blue pencil with text on vellum
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"Maybe YOU need a bath!" 2012

The Pigeon Needs a Bath!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"When is the last time YOU had a bath?!" 2012

The Pigeon Needs a Bath!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Joshua H. Sternlicht (b. 1977), filmmaker; Mo Willems (b. 1968), illustrator and animator

"Welcome to Mo's Studio," excerpt from *Mo-Cast* simulcast, 2009

Runtime 4:58
Produced by Joshua H. Sternlicht for Disney Book Group
Courtesy of the Disney Book Group and Mo Willems Studio

Final illustration for
"THAT WAS NOT A YAWN!" 2005

Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"You haven't heard the last of me!" 2005

Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems refines his drawings until they succinctly express the narrative moment, whether it's an alert defense or a droopy exhaustion, as these two illustrations depict. The true test of success is if the reader understands the character's emotion through its silhouette alone.

Published illustration for
"LET ME DRIVE THE BUS!!!" 2013

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Hyperion Books for Children

Final illustration for
"LET ME DRIVE THE BUS!!!" ca. 2002

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Aquarelle pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

This spread for *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! s*hows Willems' love of typography and expressive lettering. The bold text, made even bolder by the digitally added drop shadow that appears in the published illustration, reinforces the Pigeon's tantrum when he finds that his pleas to drive a bus are not getting him anywhere. Both the Pigeon's gestures and eye pupil variations convey the emotional crescendo.

For Willems, the act of drawing is a form of empathy. He feels that he needs to be emotionally invested in the subject in order to achieve his desired results, even when he is inking. "You don't want to be around me when I'm drawing a Pigeon book," he says.

Workflow chart, 2006

The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008
Mixed media on paper
Collection of the artist

Dummy, ca. 2001

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003
Photocopy and crayon on paper
Collection of the artist

Any daunting goal seems more achievable when broken up into discrete tasks. "It's impossible to make a book," says Willems. "It is impossible to make a film. But it is very possible to pencil one page of one background, to ink one character, and to lay out the typography of one spread."

Once he has settled on the story, page number and size, the characters and how he will render them, Willems creates a workflow chart. An organization technique drawn from his animation experience, it breaks down his tasks into a checklist of manageable bits.

Cover concept sketch, 2012

That Is Not a Good Idea!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Concept sketch for Fox, 2011

That Is Not a Good Idea!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013
Watercolor and pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Concept sketch for Chicks, 2011

That Is Not a Good Idea!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013
Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper
Collection of the artist

A fox and a goose meet. One sees the other and thinks, "Dinner!" Fox leads goose to his house in the deep, dark woods; she agrees at every turn. A chorus of chicks warns, "That is not a good idea!" But who leads whom? Charmingly told in layout formats that suggest a silent film, *That Is Not a Good Idea!* plays with visual cues and reader expectations.

Through concept sketches, Willems develops a sense of a character's personality by testing and understanding the effects of different media, expressions, poses, and costumes. At this relatively early stage, he tries to settle on the "look" of his characters. Covers are the last illustrations he tackles.

Preliminary sketch for *"Would you care to continue our walk . . . ?"* 2012

That Is Not a Good Idea!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013
Blue pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Color separation for *"Would you care to continue our walk . . . ?"* 2012

That Is Not a Good Idea!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013
Watercolor on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems created the backgrounds in *That Is Not a Good Idea!* through layers. He drew the cityscape and then used its contours to guide his painting of an additional sheet of watercolor textures. He scanned and digitally layered the color with the final drawing of the cityscape, making adjustments as needed.

Preliminary sketch for
"Leonardo researched . . . ," 2004

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
Blue pencil and graphite on vellum
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for
"Leonardo researched . . . ," 2013

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Hyperion Books for Children

The protagonist of *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster* believes he is a terrible failure as a monster because he is incapable of scaring anyone. Desperate, Leonardo researches and identifies his most likely prospect.

In the preliminary sketch, Leonardo's horns are quite large. Willems eventually shrunk them to mere stubs as a way of signaling the monster's youth and ineffectualness. He also plays with the monster's small stature relative to the page trim size, which he wanted to be the largest possible.

Final illustration for
"Leonardo tried very hard . . . ," 2004

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"Leonardo tried very hard . . . ," 2004

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"And the monster gave it all he had," 2004

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for
"Watching Knuffle Bunny," 2009

Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for
"Watching Knuffle Bunny," 2013

Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers

When Willems has planned for multiple panels, or vignettes, on a single page, he typically tackles each image individually rather than draw the entire page at once. The preliminary sketch depicting Knuffle Bunny going through the airport security X-ray scanner eventually became the third image in the published spread. Willems uses multiple panels to lengthen the reader's perceived duration of time—in this case, underscoring how long it can take to actually board a plane.

Preliminary sketch for
"KNUFFLE BUNNY!!!" 2009

Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2010
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for
". . . and into the Laundromat," ca. 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Graphite and blue pencil on paper
Private collection

Preliminary sketch for *"The whole family ran down the block,"* ca. 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Graphite on paper
Private collection

Preliminary title page sketch for
"And that's how Trixie found her first best friend,"* 2006

Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for
"Where's Knuffle Bunny?" ca. 2004

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Hyperion Books for Children

Preliminary sketch for
"Where's Knuffle Bunny?" ca. 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Blue and red pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"Where's Knuffle Bunny?" 2003

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems' drawing style for the Knuffle Bunny trilogy is a scratchy, black-inked outline, which helps to visually ease the colorful two-dimensional characters into their black-and-white photographic backgrounds.

Dummy book for "Knuffle Bear," ca. 2002

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004
Blue and red pencil, graphite on printed grid paper
Collection of the artist

After much sketching and writing, Willems makes a dummy, a rough mock-up to visualize the flow of a picture book. This dummy for *Knuffle Bunny* shows that the stuffed animal was originally a bear. In the process of working on the illustrations, he realized that while he would not be making the stuffed animal an anthropomorphic one, he needed it as a prop to register emotion or convey humor. Bunnies, over bears, have the benefit of long, expressive ears.

Caption TBA

Preliminary cover sketch, 2013

Waiting Is Not Easy! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for *"GROAN!"* 2013

Waiting Is Not Easy! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Blue and red pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"GROAN!"* 2013

Waiting Is Not Easy! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2014
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Piggie tells Gerald she has a surprise for him, but he'll have to wait because it hasn't yet arrived. As indicated by the book title, waiting is not easy, and Gerald has to wait all day long.

Though Willems addressed the characters and text independently for the final drawings, he integrated these pictorial elements for one of Gerald's groans of exasperation—a force so huge it bowls Piggie over—by plotting the composition in his preliminary sketch. "I see the typography as a form of illustration, and I see making a drawing as a form of writing. It's why I consider myself a cartoonist," says Willems.

Final illustrations for *"Spicy, huh?"* 2014

I Really Like Slop! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2015
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Published illustration for *"Spicy, huh?"* 2014

I Really Like Slop! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2015
Digital print
Collection of the artist, courtesy of Hyperion Books for Children

Final illustration for
"Everybody loved Edwina . . . ," 2005

Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
Edwina Baking Cookies, ca. 2005

Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006
Charcoal pencil on vellum
Collection of the artist

For Willems, finding friendships means being in balance with those around you. In *Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct*, Reginald von Hoobie Doobie believes he has identified something amiss in his world—Edwina, the consummate do-gooder whom everyone loves, and who happens to be a dinosaur. As the school know-it-all, Reginald is bent on proving to everyone that dinosaurs (that is, Edwina) are extinct. Yet, he's the one who is out of place. Edwina's persistently generous nature enchants everyone, and ultimately Reginald. In the closing illustration, she bakes Reginald her signature chocolate-chip cookies.

Final illustration for ". . . *the three Dinosaurs rushed through the front door,*" 2011

Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2012
Pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Willems pokes fun at fairy tales and fables in *Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs* by providing alternate, silly morals. The three dinosaurs set up their house as a trap for unsuspecting children, and Goldilocks walks into it. She lingers, but realizes the house belongs to dinosaurs, not bears, and escapes through the back door before they find her. The moral for the dinosaurs: "Lock the back door."

Final illustration for
"So he gave it to himself," 2010

Hooray for Amanda and Her Alligator!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2011
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"She noticed her alligator chewing on her head,"* 2010

Hooray for Amanda and Her Alligator!
New York: Balzer + Bray, 2011
Ink brush on paper
Collection of the artist

Hooray for Amanda and Her Alligator! comprises "six-and-a-half surprising stories about two surprising friends," Amanda and her stuffed animal Alligator, who like to surprise each other with their antics (and surprise themselves).

Unlike Knuffle Bunny to Trixie, Alligator is a living entity to Amanda. He acts of his own accord even when she is not around. However, Alligator is the embodiment of Amanda's imagination, and these two illustrations portray the metaphor visually. In one, he chews on her head because he's bored. In the other, he surprises himself in the mirror while wearing a thinking cap.

Willems acknowledges that the book is an homage to the newspaper comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*.

Final illustration for *"Hello,"* 2007

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2009
Ink and watercolor on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *". . . fancy,"* 2007

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2009
Ink and watercolor on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *". . . or cool,"* 2007

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2009
Ink and watercolor on paper
Collection of the artist

Naked Mole Rats don't wear clothes, but Wilbur enjoys dressing up. The others react with disgust when they discover him standing in front of the mirror, adjusting his tie and wearing clothing. He reasons with them: "When I get dressed I can be fancy, or funny, or cool, or I can just be an astronaut." As shown in these illustrations, Wilbur thinks "fancy" is black-tie and "cool" is a James Dean-style rockabilly.

Animals wearing costumes is classically funny, and they lend visual interest to picture books. But for Wilbur, Elephant and Piggie, and other Willems characters, dressing up also suggests the importance of creative self-expression and playing with identities.

Final illustration for *"Very fancy,"* 2006

I Am Invited to a Party! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for
"You do know parties!" 2006

I Am Invited to a Party! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *"WAIT!"* 2011

Let's Go for a Drive! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2012
Charcoal pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Preliminary sketch for *"I have bags!"* 2011

Let's Go for a Drive! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2012
Blue pencil on paper
Collection of the artist

Final illustration for *Awkward Smile*, 2014

The Thank You Book (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2015
Charcoal pencil, colored pencil, and ink on paper
Collection of Tracey Keevan

Final illustration for *"Awwwww!"* 2014

The Thank You Book (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2015
Charcoal pencil, colored pencil, and ink on paper
Collection of the artist

Final cover illustration, 2014

The Thank You Book (An Elephant & Piggie Book)
New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2015
Charcoal pencil, colored pencil, graphite, and ink on paper
Collection of Marcia Wernick