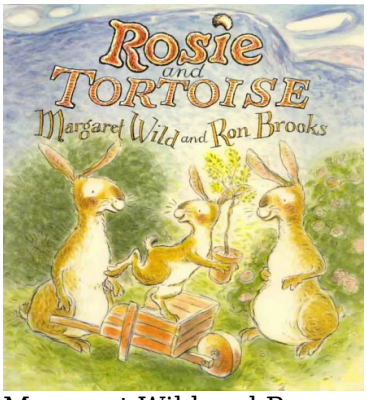
Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Rosie and Tortoise by Ron Brooks, Margaret Wild", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1021. Entry version as of October 07, 2026.

Ron Brooks , Margaret Wild

Rosie and Tortoise

Australia (1998)

TAGS: Aesop



Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks' *Rosie and Tortoise* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998). Courtesy of the Publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Rosie and Tortoise
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1998
First Edition Details	Margaret Wild, Ron Brooks, *Rosie and Tortoise*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998, 32 pp.
ISBN	9780789426307
Genre	Picture books
Target Audience	Children (age 4–8)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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Creators

Ron Brooks , b. 1948
(Illustrator)

Ron Brooks is one of Australia's most distinguished illustrators. He was born in Pambula, on the far south coast of New South Wales, and grew up in Mallacoota in Gippsland in eastern Victoria before moving to Melbourne. He trained at Swinburne Technical School, and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. After working as a freelance artist and designer, he began illustrating children's books with Jenny Wagner, including the award winning *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* (1973) and *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* (1977). His illustrations have a distinctive style, with prominent linework and detailed backgrounds, but each of his books is unique.

He has illustrated many highly regarded picture books, which have won multiple awards in the children's literature industry. His collaborations with Wagner (*The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek, John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat, Aranea*) as well as Margaret Wild (*Fox* and *Old Pig*), Ursula Dubosarsky and Margaret Peversi have established him as a key figure in the development of Australian children's books. His autobiography, *Drawn from the heart: a memoir*, describes his approach to illustrating many of his classic works.

Sources:

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"Brooks, Ron 1948–" in Lisa Kumar, *Something About the Author,*vol. 212, Gale: eBooks, 2010, 5–10.

Ron Brooks, *Drawn from the Heart: A Memoir*, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2010.

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Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au and Miriam Riverlea, Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

Margaret Wild , b. 1948
(Author)

Margaret Wild was born in Eshowe, South Africa, in 1948. Her father was a bank manager, and the family moved frequently. She attended state schools in Johannesburg. She came to Australia in 1972. She studied at Australian National University in Canberra, and worked as a freelance writer and book editor in children's publishing. Since 1984, she has published over 60 picture books, many of them award-winning, including *Let the Celebrations Begin* (1991, illustrated by Julie Vivas), which focuses on the release of Jewish prisoners from a Nazi concentration camp, and *Fox* (2000, illustrated by Ron Brooks), a fable-like story of friendship and betrayal. Wild's work is known for exploring difficult issues—on identity, trust, death, and fear. She lives in Sydney.

Sources:

Magpies: Talking about Books for Children, Author entry on Margaret Wild, magpies-net-au (accessed: March 25, 2020).

Profile at Wikipedia (accessed: March 25, 2020).

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Additional information

Summary	Rosie is a young hare eagerly waiting for her baby brother to be born. But when Bobby is born, he is tiny and weak. Rosie is scared, and avoids holding him or playing with him. As he grows (from being as heavy as an onion, to a potato, to a turnip, to "it won't be long before he weighs as much as a cauliflower!"), Rosie remains afraid for her brother, and also afraid to connect with him. One day, her father asks her "why don't you like Bobby?" "I do. It's just… He's so tiny, it makes me scared." Her father tells her a story, about a hare and a tortoise who are best friends, and who go gathering nuts in the forest. At home-time, Tortoise cannot find Hare, so he sets off alone, "slow and steady will get me home", he says, and little by little, he goes through the forest until he reaches the edge, and sees "what looked like a yellow moon moving through the trees. "It is Hare, coming to meet him with a lantern. Rosie thinks about the story, and thinks about Bobby, and his growth in weight, realising 'Bobby is slow and steady, isn't he?" That evening, Rosie holds Bobby for the first time: "Hey Bobby, hey there little Tortoise!"
Analysis	This touching story about a child who is worried about a fragile sibling, draws on elements of the Aesop's fable: *The Hare and the Tortoise*, to reflect on expectations and senses of time and growth. Hares, known for their speed and quickness, are contrasted with the "slow and steady" Tortoise, who gets where he needs to go at the end. In this situation, there is no competition between the two animals; instead an understanding that they have complementary skills. The story of Hare and Tortoise allows Rosie to understand her brother's different pace, and is useful for young readers who are adjusting to life with a new sibling. Wild carefully anchors this story in the natural world, with metaphors of rural growth, as Bobby puts on weight (from onion to potato…). Brooks's gentle illustrations add a sense of warmth and love among the animals.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Family Siblings

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