

Title		Cicada			
Author (Text & Illustration)		Shaun Tan			
Publication Year		2018	Publisher	Hodder Children's Books	
Translated Versions		Japanese translation available			
Words	152 words	Pages	32	YL Level	N/A
Synopsis					
<p>Dressed in a shabby, wrinkled gray suit and tie, Cicada works as a data entry clerk, quietly and alone, in an office in a tall building. While he has worked for 17 years without taking a leave or making mistakes, unfortunately he has never been promoted. He is not even allowed to use the bathroom in the building. As he has no place to live, he lives in the wall space of his work building. While everyone knows about it, nobody says anything. Nobody cares about Cicada. One day, as he reaches retirement, his boss calls him, and then...</p>					
Introduction					
<p>The writer Shaun Tan is also the author of <i>The Arrival</i> and <i>The Lost Thing</i>, which can be found on this website.</p> <p>There are many children stories that contain animals and insects. With the exception of Aesop's Fables, these are mostly heartwarming stories. On the contrary, <i>Cicada</i>, which is narrated by its protagonist, is a story that will cause heartache with each turn of page. The story leaves you wondering if Cicada would be saved. Everything is grey on every page, except the final scene. This scene can be interpreted by readers in various ways.</p> <p>In stories like <i>The Ant and the Grasshopper</i>, insects have been anthropomorphized. In this case, the protagonist of this story is a Cicada. Is cicada depicted in illustration, or is it a metaphor for a person? If it is the latter, what kind of a person is he? In either interpretation, the reader is forced to confront the "negative aspects of humanity." It is up to each reader to decide what to think of it. As the story makes references to discrimination, prejudice, bullying, etc., it is not a pleasant and satisfying read. However, as with all of Tan's picture books, it is a story that brings out many emotions, no matter how many times you read it. It has multiple possible interpretations, and in that sense, it is suitable for a discussion by university students.</p>					

(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)