

Title	<i>The Gift of Nothing</i>				
Author (Text & Illustration)	Patrick McDonnell				
Publication Year	2005	Publisher	Little, Brown and Company		
Translated Versions	Japanese translation available				
Words	287 words	Pages	53	YL Level	1.0
Synopsis					
<p>It's Christmas. Mooch the cat wants to give a gift to his best friend Earl the dog. But what can Mooch give to Earl? He pretty much has everything. As Mooch thinks about the gift, he comes up with the idea of gifting nothing! While Mooch is ready with his idea, unfortunately for him, the world is full of things. Where can he find nothing? He cannot even find it in stores. He returns home dejected. As he takes a seat "not looking for it, he (Mooch) found nothing." He wraps this nothing up in a box and presents the empty box tied with a ribbon. Will Earl be happy with the gift?</p>					
Introduction					
<p>Patrick McDonnell (1956–) is a cartoonist, picture book writer, author, and playwright from New Jersey, USA. He has received many awards for his popular comic, <i>MUTTS</i>. This book, <i>The Gift of Nothing</i>, became a New York Times bestseller. Both of these works feature Earl the dog and Mooch the cat.</p> <p>The first page depicts a snowy Christmas scene. The entire book is white with snowy white pages, very short sentences above, and small images drawn in black, white, and red at the bottom. While the simple text and pictures give the impression of the imagined world being empty, the world nevertheless seems to contain something rich despite the emptiness. The "nothing" Mooch searches as gift is not empty either, it contains something warm and rich. There is something in nothing. What is it? It is like a Zen dialogue. The back of the picture book has the following comment:</p> <p>“A sweet tale with a Zen message.” — <i>People</i> (an American magazine)</p> <p>Mooch and Earl's interactions are heartwarming. The adorable, near-square book makes you want to softly open it when you want to feel tender. It also has the charm of making one choose this book as a gift to give it to someone special, like Mooch.</p>					

© English Education through Extensive Reading (3ER)

(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)