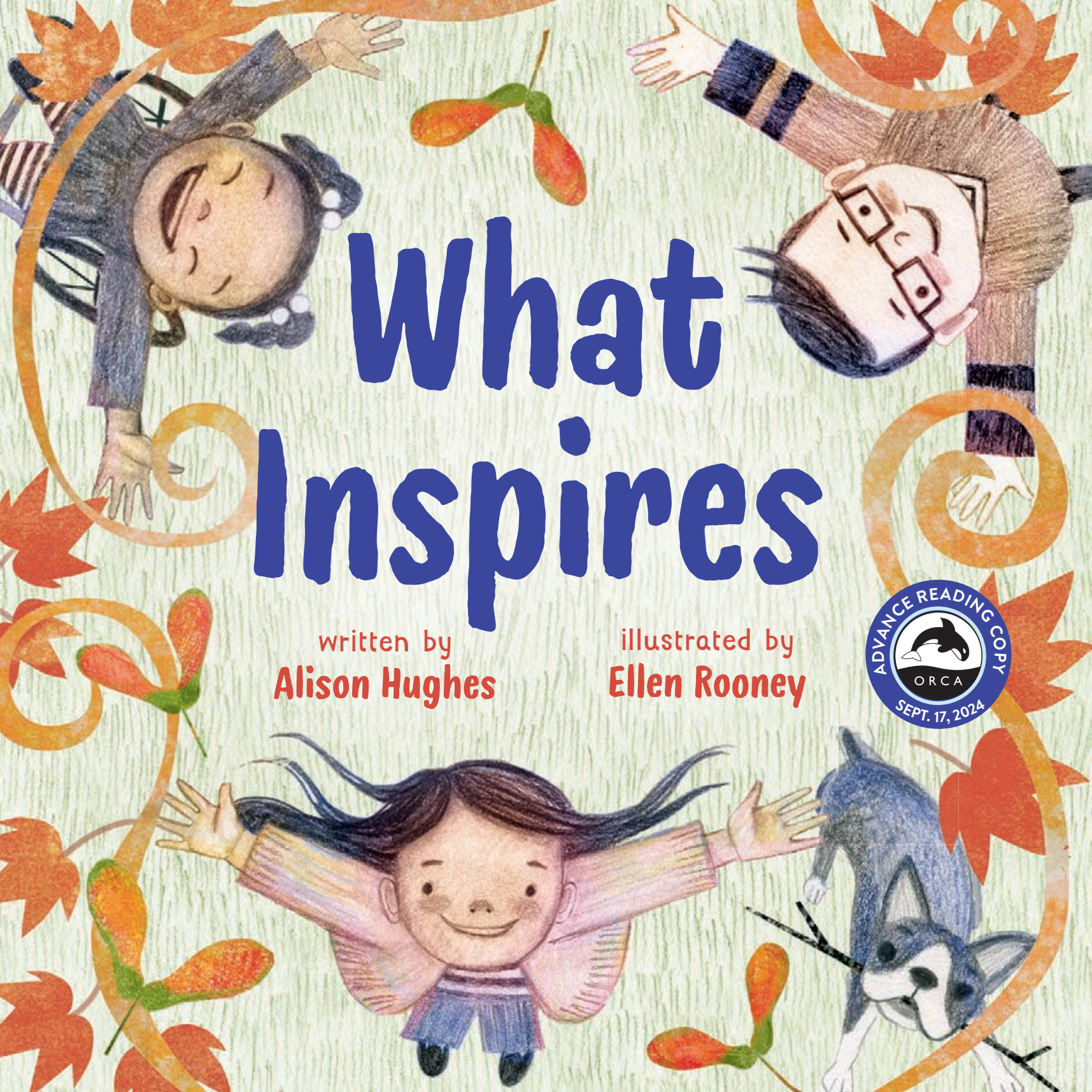
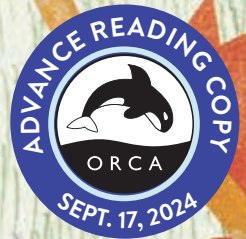


# What Inspires

written by  
**Alison Hughes**

illustrated by  
**Ellen Rooney**



# Look around— inspiration is everywhere!

**Three friends go to the park**, where it seems like nothing is happening—but something is. The wind is stirring the trees and sending maple keys spiralling down through the air, inspiring the children to whirl and dance...which makes a baby laugh and clap and a man tap a rhythm with his cane. Soon, everyone at the park is part of a domino effect of creativity, from painting and building castle forts to having daring adventures and sailing the imaginary seas. Finally, the children stage a colorful parade and watch stories unfurl in the clouds.

When nighttime arrives and the friends head home, they think nothing more could possibly happen. But something does: their minds continue to create fantastical possibilities in their dreams.

**Alison Hughes** is an award-winning author of many books for children and young adults, including *The Silence Slips In*, winner of the R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature, and *Hit the Ground Running*, a nominee for the Governor General's Literary Award. Alison is a university writing advisor, volunteers with children and literacy groups and gives frequent workshops and presentations at schools, libraries, festivals and conferences across Canada. She lives in Edmonton with her family.

**Ellen Rooney** is an award-winning designer, artist and children's book illustrator. Her textural mixed media artwork combines many traditional art techniques, like pencil drawing, painting, printmaking and collage, often combined with digital techniques. She was the winner of the 2021 Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize for *Grandmother School*. Originally from Massachusetts, she now lives in the southern Okanagan Valley in British Columbia.

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# What Inspires

**Author:** Alison Hughes

**Illustrator:** Ellen Rooney

September 17, 2024

In this buoyant picture book, three friends go to the park and their creativity spreads to everyone around them, into dance, chalk drawings, the construction of a mighty castle and, when the day is over, inspirational dreams.

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## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Three friends go to the park, where nothing is happening, except the maple keys spinning down from the trees, inspiring them into a twirling dance, which makes a baby clap and a man tap his cane, and the creativity blossoms from there. We watch the domino effect of inspiration widen and close out with the children's imaginative dreams.
- *What Inspires* evokes the free-form nature of inspiration, shows how ideas can come from anywhere, demonstrates the spark of creativity passing from one person to the next and, finally, captures the joy of open-ended play.
- The (mostly) outdoor setting and depiction of creativity in many forms makes the activities in this book open to everyone and provides a perfect springboard for classroom discussion about how anything can be art, from painting to building a stick fort.
- Alison Hughes (who has written 20 books for young adults and children) and Ellen Rooney (whose work includes the award-winning *Grandmother School*) are a powerhouse combination, as Alison's lyrical writing is perfectly complemented by Ellen's vibrant, dynamic illustrations.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

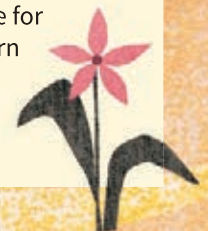
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PHOTO CREDIT: GARY SERONIK

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Ellen Rooney** is an award-winning designer, artist and children's book illustrator. Her textural mixed media artwork combines many traditional art techniques, like pencil drawing, painting, printmaking and collage, often combined with digital techniques. She is the winner of the 2021 Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize for *Grandmother School*. Originally from Massachusetts, she now lives in the southern Okanagan Valley in British Columbia.



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# What Inspires

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# What Inspires



On a bright spring morning, three friends went to the park.

It seemed like nothing was happening.

Nothing at all.



But something was.

The wind was rustling the leaves of the trees,  
sending seeds spiraling into the air.





The friends spun around and around in a joyful seed dance, wild and free.



Others watched the twirling dance  
and rolled  
and spun  
and swung.

A baby clapped in delight  
and sang a baby song,  
and her mother clapped along.



Which started the tap, tap,  
tapping of a symphony,

the painting of  
beautiful pictures



and the construction of a strong and mighty castle.





The castle's splendid flag waved  
at a passing ship  
sailing the ocean blue.



A thrilling adventure unfolded  
over land and sea,



with magical creatures,



a daring battle,



a dramatic chase





and a noisy, colorful parade.

When they were tired,  
the friends rested in the cool wind  
and watched the shifting stories  
in the sky.





As the sun shouted its farewell, they ran and flew and galloped home.



And later, in quiet, nearly bedtime moments,  
other ideas blossomed too.

As night fell, and they slipped into sleep,  
they thought nothing else would happen.  
Nothing at all.

But something did.



In the twirling dance  
of their dreams,

they wove colors, shapes and  
adventures

into something beautiful  
and strange  
and new.

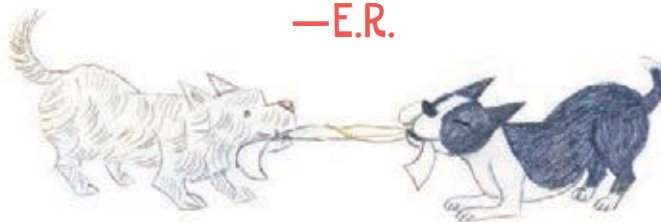


For Sam and his goodhoperly.

—A.H.

To my art teachers.

—E.R.



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