

Editor's Note

You Can Go Home Again

By Sharon Verbeten

On a crisp Friday in late November, I was supposed to be visiting the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) in Madison, WI, to peruse the starred books of 2023. And I did—tables full of them.

But two things distracted me; first was the amazing historic collection of books, which includes original books and artwork from Wisconsin native Ellen Raskin, author of the Newbery Award-winning *The Westing Game*. Her illustrations were bold, with in-your-face colors and funky typefaces—definitely a force ahead of her time.

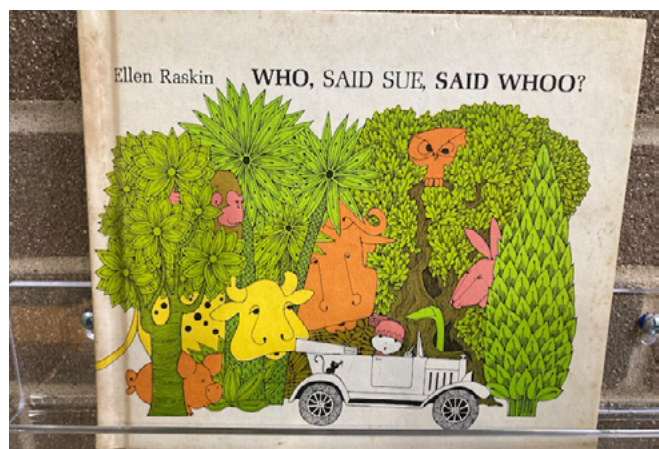
I was enthralled by many items in the historic collection—among them a book illustrated by my idol Maurice Sendak that I have never heard of (*Sarah's Room* by Doris Orgel)—which I now must find online to add to my Sendak shelf! I was also intrigued by a tiny volume called *Black Misery* by Langston Hughes, a powerful and poignant poem that spoke to the experience of being black in the newly integrated 1960s.

But in addition to the collection, the second wonderful distraction was the staff—including librarians Merri Lindgren and Megan Schliesman. I've known them for decades, dating back to the early 1990s when I—a lowly library school student at UW-Madison—gained my love of children's books while working at the CCBC as a student assistant under the tutelage of the iconic former director Ginny Moore Kruse. It was a pleasure to “go home again,” to see the CCBC with more experienced and appreciative eyes.

It never gets old finding a hidden gem in the walls of a familiar library; for me, both the books and the staff were gems I'll never forget. &



I was thrilled to reconnect with old friend, and CCBC librarian, Merri Lindgren, at the library on the campus at UW-Madison.



This 1973 classic was written by Wisconsin native Ellen Raskin, whose archives are stored at the CCBC in Madison, WI.

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