



Editor's Note

The Books of My Life

By Sharon Verbeten

We all have books that have impacted our lives, for many different reasons. I bet you'd be able to think back now and come up with a few; here are a few of mine.

Books from Childhood. I'm from a middle-class family from Wisconsin, not far from Racine, where Little Golden Books were born. So it doesn't surprise me that my two favorite children's books were those amazing golden-spined gems. Topping my list of reads and re-reads was Margaret Wise Brown's *Mister Dog*, still in print today. I'm not sure if it was the shaggy attractiveness of Garth Williams' illustrations of Crispin's Crispian or the fact that he "belonged to himself" that resonated with me. Either way, it was my favorite read of all time. A close second was *The Color Kittens*, yet another treasure by Brown. The colors, the mess—everything about it spoke to me; they remain honored treasures to me, although my battered copies are long gone.

Books from my Teens. I'm sorry to say that although I've always been an avid reader, I think the busy-ness of school, jobs, and teen angst led me to forego one of my favorite pastimes. Obviously, I read with fervor any assigned texts, never reaching for Cliff's Notes. I remember *To Kill a Mockingbird* being one of my early favorites; still is, yes, despite some of its "white savior" controversy today. I later fell into a rabbit hole wanting to learn all I could about the reclusive Harper Lee.

Books from Adulthood. Here it gets tricky because there are so many. But the books that have had the most impact on my life are *On Writing* by Stephen King (which helped me understand that even famous authors once got rejected) and *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke (another love letter to writing).

Since I'm a special needs mom, I also am partial to fiction that features characters with Down syndrome—especially those that outline the challenges. I loved *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*, which tells of a family in the 1960s—the not so long ago past—when a father makes a devastating decision about his child with Down syndrome. I met author Kim Edwards at ALA many years ago, and I had tears in my eyes as I told her how much her book had affected me as a mom.

These are the books that have impacted me; how about you? &

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