

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

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ALSC
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2011 Awards Issue
Newbery, Caldecott, Wilder, Belpré Speeches
Lois Lowry and Her Amazing Arbuthnot Lecture
Music, Movement, and Early Literacy

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Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

Summer is over, and so too is the craziness that accompanies summer reading programs. But as much as our lives are busier in the summer, it's perhaps our most ideal opportunity to reach both avid and reluctant readers.

I don't think I realized that as much when I was a fledgling librarian twenty years ago. I was learning the duties of a new career, navigating a branch that was new to me, and (believe it or not) still dealing with the limitations of a card catalog!

When I returned to the career last year, I felt more prepared to make a difference in children's lives. Not only had I become a mother, and therefore intimately in tune with the needs of a young child, but I also had more technology, resources, and mentors available.

Use this post-summer time to reassess how your summer reading program affected your audience, as well as you. Did it fly by with stress, or did you embrace the challenges as opportunities?

The Summer/Fall issue of *Children and Libraries* is always one of my favorites because it affords the opportunity to read the acceptance speeches by award-winning authors and illustrators. Whether or not you were able to hear them in person, I hope you'll reap as much from reading them as I did. ☺

The Dog-Eared Page Did Your Faves Get the Nod?

Consider it the "icon" award, in much the same way the music world honors longtime contributors.

Every two years, The Hans Christian Andersen Awards are presented by IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made an important and lasting contribution to children's literature. IBBY National Sections from 33 countries have made their selections, submitting 28 authors and 31 illustrators as candidates for the 2012 awards.

Among the most well-known and recognizable names nominated this year are:

United States: Author Paul Fleischman; Illustrator Chris Raschka

Canada: Author Tim Wynne-Jones

Czech Republic: Illustrator Peter Sís

Ireland: Author Eoin Colfer

Russia: Illustrator Gennadij Spirin

United Kingdom: Author Philip Pullman; Illustrator John Burningham

The winners will be announced at the IBBY press conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair on March 19, 2012.

For more information about IBBY's program and current projects, please contact the IBBY Secretariat or visit: www.ibby.org. ☺

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Website

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Statement of Purpose

Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the Association. (From the journal's "Policies and Procedures" document adopted by the ALSC board, April 2004.)

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Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Julie Corsaro
ALSC President, 2010-11
juliealsc@gmail.com

Julie Corsaro of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a former classroom teacher, school librarian, and collection development and youth services librarian. A writer, reviewer, and children's literature consultant, she is the editor of NoveList School News.

Looking Back—and Ahead

When I received an invitation in April to give the outgoing ALSC President's Address in these pages, I began thinking about what has happened so far during my presidential tenure and what, in the short time that remained, was yet to come.

Looking back, my thoughts turned immediately to the very successful ALSC Institute in Atlanta and the plans already underway for the next version of this stellar continuing-education event in Indianapolis. I then took a short hop back a few weeks to the exceptional

Forty-Third Annual Arbuthnot Honor Lecture featuring the brilliant Lois Lowry and hosted by the impressive St. Louis County Library.

Looking ahead, I knew I was about to receive an update regarding the ever-growing participation in the crucial family literacy initiative *El día de los niños, El día de los libros*—with its broadened mandate in this, its festive *quince* year. And with visions of summer swimming in my head, I couldn't help but have merry thoughts about the many award presentations to come in New Orleans, especially the prestigious Newbery, Caldecott, and Wilder medals, to be celebrated at a banquet that will, no doubt, be grand.

These images and many others cemented in my mind the feeling that the great achievements of our association—far too numerous to name here (although I will mention the just-released second edition of our outstanding early literacy initiative, Every Child Ready to Read)—are part of an essential, ongoing process made possible by the hard work and commitment of our many members-at-large, our board of directors, and our ALSC office staff.

Everyone works in concert with other divisions within ALA and other organizations that share a strong dedication, under increasingly challenging conditions, to the highest standards of service to young people.

As we prepare to set out on a new course forged by the ALSC Strategic Plan, 2012-2017 and its "Big Hairy Audacious Goal" that "libraries are recognized as vital to all children and the communities that support them," I want to thank you for all you do for children, libraries, and reading. I truly feel fortunate to have been the recipient of so many wonderful opportunities courtesy of ALSC, and honored to have served this year as your president. I hope to continue working in your behalf and that of the best library association in the world. ☺



Incoming President's ALSC Message

Mary Fellows
ALSC President, 2011-12
maryalsc@gmail.com

Mary Fellows is Manager, Youth and Family Services, at the Upper Hudson Library System, Albany, N.Y.

Communicate Value

It was fourth grade, and our class was learning to write in cursive. Each letter had its proper shape, and our goal was to imitate that shape as closely as possible. But I had a problem—my mom and my dad both signed our last name with the “F” facing backward, and I had learned to do the same. My teacher was adamant that this was *not* the way an “F” looked. Every penmanship paper came back corrected in red ink.

I was perturbed. I placed a high value on good grades, but this was a point of family honor. My parents, always alert to teaching us to solve our own problems, suggested that I talk about it with my teacher.

So the next time I received a penmanship paper with the F's corrected, I took a deep breath and went up to Mrs. Eklund's desk. I explained to her very earnestly that my dad made his F's facing to the left, my mom made her F's

facing to the left, and my older brother and sister did too. I *needed* to make my F's face left because it was our Family Penmanship Tradition.

Mrs. Eklund looked at me, and I thought her eyes started to crinkle like they did when she smiled. She said that now she understood—I had an important reason for the shape of my F's. So from that day on, I had her permission to make my F's backwards.

That day was my first experience with the power of purposeful communication.

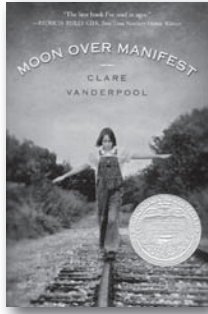
During the past months as ALSC President-Elect, I have thought about how I can make a difference during a one-year presidency. My answer has become my theme: communicate value. In fourth grade, I gained my teacher's support when I explained the personal value—family identity—behind my request. In 2011, the value to be communicated is the worth of our work, and the stakes are very high.

Communicating value is something I will be doing as I speak and act on behalf of our association. I will communicate the value of what we do in our work connecting children, tweens, and literacy. I will communicate the value of expert professional librarians serving youth. I will communicate the value of ALSC as your definitive source for new, relevant information and resources. I will communicate the value of ALSC as the leader in effectively driving the future of library services to children and their families.

Communicating value also is a skill I will teach and encourage each of you to use. My goal is for every ALSC member to understand and confidently communicate the value of our work. I set this goal in pursuit of professional and personal joy for each one of you, and for a society that views libraries as central and integral partners in maintaining vibrant communities.

So, beginning in July, you will be hearing from me. Our ALSC-L list, the ALSC Blog, ALA Connect, ALSC tweets, and the ALSC Facebook page are all places

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Newbery Medal Acceptance Speech

Someone Else's Ordinary

Clare Vanderpool



Photo Credit: Annmarie Algya

Clare Vanderpool is the winner of the 2011 Newbery Medal for *Moon Over Manifest*, published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.

Thank you for this incredible honor and for the opportunity to express my gratitude tonight. I'm also happy to address the questions that abounded in San Diego five months ago: "Moon over what?" "Clare who?"

I come from a family of optimists. My parents are both Depression-era children—one born on a farm and one raised in a little house next to the railroad tracks. They raised my siblings and me with a can-do attitude. "You'll figure it out. You can make it work. Keep at it. Anything is possible." And I believed them.

Their approach to life is what gave me the wherewithal to write a book. To work hard at it. To try and try again after many attempts and many rejections. Figure it out. Make it work. Keep at it. Their confidence and their optimism allowed me to dream big and set lofty goals.

But even with that spirit, that optimism, that determination, I never set out to win a Newbery. I never even dreamed of it. And I have always dreamed big! Just not that big.

So I'd like to say a few words of thanks.

To my parents for helping me see that the cup is more than half full—it is overflowing.

To my incredible agent, Andrea Cascardi, for being the one to say, "Yes!" to my query. For her enthusiasm, her guidance, and mostly her friendship.

To Michelle Poploff, my editor extraordinaire, for asking all the questions that needed to be asked, challenging me when it wasn't quite there, and making my first experience in publishing an absolute joy.

To my group of writer friends—Dian Curtis Regan, Deb Seely, Lois Ruby, and Christie Breault—for their support, encouragement, and loving criticism of the book during the many years in which I was the only "yet to be published" author in the group. Without them, I would still be an aspiring writer.

To my sister, Annmarie, because this would not be nearly as much fun without her.

To my family. My children—Luke, Paul, Grace, and Lucy. My husband, Mark. You are the reason my cup is overflowing.

And especially to the Newbery committee. Thank you for honoring my book in this incredible way. For spending time in my story, living among the people of Manifest, and loving them. They're not much for medals or pageantry, but I'll be happy to accept this award on their behalf.

The Call

Someone asked me recently if winning the Newbery is as wonderful as having a baby. That analogy falls a bit short, but it *is* like having a baby if you didn't know you were pregnant. There are no months of preparation. No pre-Newbery vitamins to build up for the big event. And no book called *What to Expect When You Win the Newbery* to guide and instruct. It's a bit shocking and overwhelming.

On the morning of January 10, I was going about my business of cleaning up the kitchen when the phone rang. It was Cynthia Richey, the chairperson of the Newbery committee. She said I had won the Newbery Medal.

She could have said, "You have been selected to man the first space shuttle to Mars," and I would have been less

"If I have a particular strength, this is it: I have a strong connection to place, and for me there is a story around every corner."

shocked. And I probably would not have cried. Or she could have said, "You're having a baby! Today!" And I would have been more prepared. I know how to do that. In fact, I've still got a name or two I could have pulled out of a hat very quickly.

But that's not what she said. Actually, I can't tell you exactly what she said because after she identified herself and



Clare Vanderpool (left) receives her Newbery Medal from 2011 Newbery Committee Chair Cynthia K. Richey at the Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet. Photo Credit: Alexandra and Michael Buxbaum.

mentioned the words “Newbery Medal,” my brain couldn’t absorb it all at once.

So what does one do with that kind of information? I looked at my husband with tears in my eyes and shared the news. Mark is a very understated man. You can tell him the house is on fire and he’ll stand up, stretch, and say, “Well, I guess I’d better put it out.” But this time even he was excited!

We went down the street to tell my parents. My mom cried and my dad beamed. He said, “That is just wonderful!” “Thunderation!” “Hot diggity dog!” and things of that nature. Then after all that he said, “So, Mary Clare, what is the Newbery?”

I texted the boys, went over to school, and jumped up and down with the girls. Then my sister came down to my house. You know the one: Annmarie. She’s mentioned in the acknowledgments as being two-thirds Abilene. We watched the live broadcast as other awards were being announced. The Printz. The Caldecott. The Newbery Honor books. Then as the tension mounted to the announcement of the Medal, she and I looked at each other with a shared sense of dread. What if there had been a mistake? I had already told my parents. Then they announced *Moon Over Manifest* and Annmarie and I breathed a sigh of relief. It was on the Internet. It must be true.

The Writer

So back to the question of “Moon over what?” And “Clare who?” Allow me to introduce myself. I am a mom. I am a writer. And I am from Kansas. If you have a map of the country and throw a dart directly at the middle and you’re just a little off, you’ll hit Wichita. I begin by telling you where I’m from because place is very important to me. I don’t know if I am typical in this regard, but I am very much a product of my geography. The neighborhood, the pool, the sledding hill (it’s Kansas, so a good sledding hill is a pretty big deal).

I love living in Kansas and am always a little befuddled by the need on the part of some to seek out acknowledgment or validation from perfect strangers about where they live. Like when the audience members at a television show clap because the host mentions their hometown. As if being mentioned makes us worthy or of value. Some people feel the need to tout certain aspects of our state to raise ourselves in the esteem of others. We are the home of this industry or that celebrity. I have never understood where this need comes from.

I’ve always been of the mind that if more people know the wonderful things about where I live, they’ll want to move there and then it would become very crowded.

And besides, they never pull out the big guns, anyway. If they *really* wanted to impress the other audience members, they would make it known that Wichita is the birthplace of—wait for it—*mentholatum*. Now I’m going to be in big trouble at home because we will be overrun with tourists and sightseers, and people with chest congestion and runny noses.

I think this connection to place is fairly common. People remember where they were in significant moments of their lives. I can tell you where I was when I finished reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins*—but I won’t because it will embarrass my mom. Okay, I’ll give you a hint. There is a significant amount of porcelain involved.

Instead, I’ll tell you about a special place where I checked out *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and *A Wrinkle in Time* and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. My school library was a very ordinary library conveniently located on the gym stage. Isn’t that where every school puts their library? If not, they should.

It was on a stage with red velvet curtains so there was a built-in sense of drama, mystery even. It was elevated in a place of importance like an altar. It had books with cards tucked inside where you could actually write your name and the date. These cards kept a history of the book and its readers, like a family tree. The book might even indicate who donated it. And inside, it had a stamp that said, “This book is the property of Our School.”

It says this book is a part of us, we claim it as one of our own. If it wanders from the fold, we will look for it until it is found. This is the kind of relationship we have with our books. They’re important and are to be protected and revered and kept in a place of honor. Our library was a special place.

So with this love and affection for my home, my place, it was somewhat of a surprise to me that when I set out to write the story that became *Moon Over Manifest*, I found myself feeling a little lacking. I knew I wanted to write a story about place and about home from the perspective of a young girl who didn’t have a home.

But when I considered where to set my story, I found myself wondering if *my* place, *my* home, would be good enough. I am always a bit envious of southern writers. They have swamps and bayous and gulfs. I live in the plains. Southerners speak with an accent, and I imagine they say things like “Well, shut my mouth.” And “Butter my biscuit!” We don’t have an accent, and around my house we say very ordinary things like “Thunderation” and “Hot diggity dog” and “Put a little mentholatum on it.” But that’s so ordinary. Everybody says those things, right?

Don’t get me wrong. There are certain aspects of Kansas that are out of the ordinary. If you pay us a compliment like “That dress looks nice,” we reply with, “Thanks, I got it on sale!” Most of the country asks for a soda. We call it a pop. Still, I’ve lived my life in one zip code and things are pretty ordinary at 67218.

But I do have a certain life experience that changed my perspective. Yes, I may have lived in one zip code, but I’ve traveled through many, many others. Growing up, we toured the country for three weeks every summer in a seventeen-and-a-half-foot Holiday Rambler—a travel trailer. On these trips we saw sights that were very different from my home—canyons, mesas, oceans, everglades. But over time and probably more in looking back, I realized something. That what is to me strange, exotic, extraordinary is just someone else’s ordinary.

From my little window to the world in that Holiday Rambler, I could see that while some of those people have a different view from their back door—mountains or forests or oceans or skyscrapers—we all have a similar experience on either side of that back door. The same hopes and dreams. The same need for community and belonging. There is something comforting about this common experience of being human. And the greatest comfort is how we express that experience. How we give it voice. Through story.

Optimism and perseverance alone does not make a good writer. There has to be some blood, sweat, and tears. Did I work on the craft? Absolutely. This is my first published book, but it is not my first attempt at putting pen to paper. I started writing, really writing, with intent and

“Winning the Newbery is like having a baby if you didn’t know you were pregnant. There are no months of preparation. No book called What to Expect When You Win the Newbery to guide and instruct.”

purpose, when my first child was born. He is now seventeen years old. During those years, I did what a writer does. I changed diapers and I wrote. I made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and I wrote. I read and I wrote. I listened to what others had to say about writing and I wrote. I try to approach my writing the same way I approach everything else in my life. Work hard at it and have fun with it. Enjoy the experience.

But just as optimism is not enough, hard work is also not enough. Somewhere along the way, craft and muse must meet. Somewhere the writer must loosen the reins on plot, character, and conflict and allow the creative process room to stretch and pulse and breathe life into the bones of the story. Perhaps that is what the creative process is. Having a connection to the stories within oneself and giving voice to them.

If I have a particular strength, this is it. I have a strong connection to place and for me there is a story around every corner. And I remember those stories. The ones I’ve been told. The ones I’ve heard in passing. And the ones I’ve made up. They live in me as surely as I live in Kansas.

The Story

As I said, I never set out to win the Newbery. Many years ago, I set out to write a children’s book. I wanted it to be interesting and fun and have characters that I cared about and that the reader would care about. I wanted it to make me laugh and make me cry and do the same for the reader. And I wanted it to say something. Something honest about real people; their hopes, their dreams, their flaws, their goodness.

I came across a quote from *Moby-Dick*. “It is not down in any map; true places

never are.” That’s when the wheels began turning. What is a true place? What would a true place be for someone who had never lived anywhere for more than a few weeks or months at a time? What if it was a young girl during the Depression? A young girl named Abilene Tucker.

I’m always amazed at the writing process. We writers have great plans for the story we think we’re telling only to find out that our characters have another idea. *Moon Over Manifest* is about home and community, but in many ways it became a story about storytelling and the transformative power of story in our lives. Yes, the people of *Manifest* are ordinary people living in the plains of Kansas. But through their story, in the very telling of it, these ordinary people show themselves to be beautiful and extraordinary. And I take no credit for that. I’m surrounded by people like that. As Abilene would say, “People who are tired and hurt and lonely and kind.” And I would add, people who are funny and humble and generous.

Story evolves from story. Take Sister Redempta. I’ve known some Sister Redemptas or variations of her. She comes from grade school stories of my own or ones I’ve heard of Sisters back in the day. My mom tells of a girl in her school who was a little plump, a little plain, a little raggedy. This girl had been acting up in school and was sent to the principal’s office—Sister Mary Somebody. Sister said, “Now why would you want to act this way? Not nice behavior coming from such a pretty little girl.” The girl went away feeling not chastised but *pretty*. That’s a Sister Redempta.

I know some Shadys, too. And Eudora Larkins and Ivan DeVores and Velma T.’s. But don’t we all? If we really pay attention and really recall, don’t we all have stories that could create characters like these?

The things that unite us, in fact bind us together as people, are simple. Laughter—no one has to teach us to laugh. There's nothing better than babies' laughter that bubbles up from their core. Tears—no one teaches us to cry. When moved, the tears just come.

And story—the way we give voice to our laughter and tears. From the time children can speak: “Mama, guess what!” Or the boy in school who is asked what is six times four. He raises his hand and says, “Um . . . one time . . .” He doesn't want to give the answer to six times four. He wants to tell a story. Abilene would call this a universal—this need for story.

“Allow me to introduce myself. I am a mom. I am a writer. And I am from Kansas. Growing up, we toured the country for three weeks every summer in a trailer, and I realized that what is to me strange, exotic, extraordinary is just someone else's ordinary.”

Abilene, who has never experienced *some* of the things that bind us to one another—community, friendship, belonging—she knows the power of story. That's one of the things we first learn about Abilene: her daddy does his best talking in stories. And she clings to them. Tucks them in deep like the compass tucked away in her satchel. And saves them for when she needs them.

And of all the places for her to end up in her drifting: Manifest, Kansas, the stopping point for immigrants and refugees from around the world. Displaced people just like her. People

with stories of their own but whose stories become hers. Isn't that how we all come to know one another—through our own stories?

Through the people of Manifest, Abilene experiences the power in a story. It can change us in the telling and in the listening. As writers, readers, librarians, storytellers—we are all diviners. We reveal things, make them known, especially to ourselves. Through stories we recognize each other and ourselves. We recognize what is common to all of us. The ordinary—but in the telling it becomes beautiful and extraordinary.

The Newbery

So back to the Newbery. When *Moon Over Manifest* was published last October I was living large. My family and friends all came out for the big book launch and we celebrated a dream come true. Then January 10 rolled around and something happened that I had not dreamed. Something extraordinary. I received word that my book will forever be listed among the likes of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Number the Stars*, and *A Year Down Yonder*. Books that I loved and I swear loved me back.

What does it mean? How do I put it in context? It's not something I set out to accomplish. It's not something I earned. So quite simply, it is a gift. And that is context enough. A gift, like a story, has a giver and a receiver. That implies a relationship. The kind of relationship we witness in Manifest, Kansas, when Shady and Jinx and the people of Manifest are mixing up their elixir. Shady is asked to offer a prayer, which sounds more like a toast, and the townspeople respond:

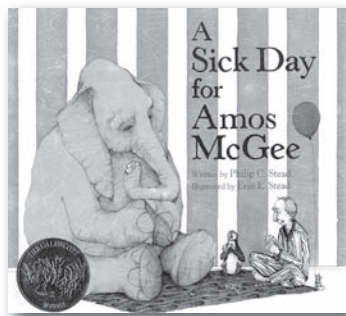
“Amen,” they said in unison, these citizens of the world, and they held their breath as the many and varied ingredients that had been simmered and stewed, distilled and chilled, were combined to make something new. Something greater than the sum of its parts.

That is the best part of a story—that relationship between teller and listener, between writer and reader. We each bring our own ingredients of memory and experience, loss and longing, to add to the story pot, to simmer and stew.

I'm honored, humbled, and grateful beyond words. Thank you for the way in which you have received and honored my book—my story. If in giving me this award you are saying that my story touched you, then we share in this honor. Because your story touches mine and mine mingles with yours, and as writer and reader we throw in our own ingredients to the story pot to simmer and stew, to make something new, something greater than the sum of its parts. ☺

A Trivia Oops

Two eagle-eyed readers found an error in the Spring 2011 issue of CAL. In our Dog-Eared Page feature on p. 2, the question was posed, “Which author/illustrator holds a Caldecott ‘threepeat,’ winning the coveted award three times?” The answer was David Wiesner, which is correct. However, as the readers pointed out, Marcia Brown also holds that honor. She won in 1955 for *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper*, 1962 for *Once a Mouse*, and in 1983 for *Shadow*.



Caldecott Medal Acceptance Speech

An Old Man, an Elephant, and a Lack of Confidence

Erin E. Stead



Photo Credit: Nicole Haley Photography

Erin E. Stead is the winner of the 2011 Caldecott Medal for *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*, written by Philip C. Stead and published by Neal Porter Books/Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.

I'm not very good with words. I am not a very good storyteller and I tend to think in metaphors that make sense only to me. In normal conversation, I have trouble responding in a timely fashion. Words will pass through multiple filters before my brain approves them and then, as they reach my mouth, the conversation has moved on. So it is strange for me now to be in charge of a conversation with all of you. I will try my best, and hopefully by the end I will have made some sense. To this audience of word-loving librarians, writers, and editors, I wish us all luck.

The last few months have left me searching for the right words. I have been hoping to come up with the exact turn of phrase for feelings I have yet to fully accept. The trouble with being an illustrator who is not a writer is that I am afraid I will fall short.

Mr. Bryan Collier and Mr. David Ezra Stein, I can't think of a better phrase than "deeply humbled." I am deeply humbled, in a sense that I have never experienced before, to share shelf space with you both. Mr. Collier, I saw an original of yours once and stood in front of it for ten minutes trying to decode it so that I could imitate it. I could not. With *Dave the Potter*, you've given me another book to study. Mr. Stein, you have so quickly become one of my favorites. Ever since *Leaves* was published, I think to myself, "Are you okay?" as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn. If this speech gets too long-winded, I hope a little red chicken pops out and says, "Don't talk to strangers! So Erin didn't. THE END!"

To Ms. Judy Zuckerman and members of the 2011 Caldecott committee, I can really only say this: Thank you.

It is difficult to say more than that to you because nothing else truly expresses my gratitude. I've tried to distill an indescribable amount of appreciation into words. I've written some terrible sentences attempting to explain all of the excitement, terror, and honor that orbit around this huge planet of gratefulness. But those words seem small compared to these immense feelings. The only words that come close are thank you. I will work very hard to live up to this award.

The news of winning was overwhelming. I'm not sure if it was a faulty speakerphone or my own shocked ears that added static to your voices. After we hung up, I called my editor and made him repeat everything. Slowly. It's good that the award cannot be taken away from an illustrator for lack of grace when being presented with this news. I don't think my desperate need to sit down translated very well over the phone. What a sneaky, wonderful morning you must have had, committee members. It was wonderful for me, too. You'll have to believe me now since I was unable to express it then.

It is a beautiful twist of fate that I am standing here because of a little book that is about having good and loyal friends. If I did not have my own friends who continue to arrive at just the right time, I would not be here. I should not be standing here alone. There is a whole cast of characters that should be at my side, and perhaps you can envision them as a rhinoceros, an elephant, a tortoise, or an owl. You should know, however, that I am probably the penguin.

Before Philip introduced me to Amos McGee and his friends, I had completely lost the courage to make my own drawings. I suffered from a severe and self-inflicted loss of confidence. I made the decision to stop drawing completely, and stuck to that decision, for better or for worse, for three years.

At the end of the third year, I was unable to ignore the fact that without drawing, a part of me was missing. With a lot of patience and encouragement from Philip, I began to draw a picture that had been knocking around in my head for years. I did it at the kitchen table so as to not overwhelm myself, a little bit at a time. It was a very tiny drawing.

It was a drawing of an old man and an elephant.

It is a tremendous gift to have people in your life that know better than you.

While I was drawing at the kitchen table in 2007, Philip and Neal Porter were already working on a book together. In passing, our friend George O'Connor, also published by Neal, told Neal that I



Erin Stead (right) receives her Caldecott Medal from 2011 Caldecott Committee Chair Judy Zuckerman at the Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet. Photo Credit: Alexandra and Michael Buxbaum.

was an artist as well, but that there was no way I would show him my drawings. I was much too shy. Neal very quickly sent an e-mail to Phil asking him if there was any way he could see one of those drawings. Philip sent him my not-yet-finished elephant in secret. I guess Neal must have thought it was okay because he asked Phil if we could meet.

I can stand here today encouraging anyone who will listen to never, under any circumstance, doubt Philip C. Stead or Neal Porter (I think the two of them will find this funny, as they probably feel—and rightly so—that I doubt them all the time. But that is my flaw, not theirs).

I met Neal shortly after the secret elephant exchange. He took Phil and me out to dinner and spoke to me about books (a fast and true way to my heart). He spoke of nurturing new talent and finding the right book for the right artist, which didn't necessarily happen without failure. He was extremely careful and sensitive with me. I loved him instantly. Then, toward the end of the meal, he leaned over the table and said quietly, "You know, this is all really just an excuse tonight to try to convince you to make a picture book.

I realize this story is extraordinary and I am extraordinarily lucky to be a part of it. At the time, I was aware of that as well. I was unable to say no to this opportunity.

But I was terrified.

I never grew out of picture books. I believe in them. A picture book allows

a child ownership of art—even if it's just for the two weeks they check it out of the library. That book is theirs. I'm not sure any other art form replicates that feeling.

Philip always knew I should make books. I did not. I thought I was too serious, my pictures too tiny and quiet to hold their own on a bookshelf. This was a career I deeply admired and respected but felt I did not deserve. And maybe couldn't handle. It is hard to make books. It *should* be hard to make good ones. It all has to hang together so tightly—the words and pictures and everything in that universe held together by book boards. It is so easy to lose a child with just one wrong note.

Even when my artist feet were on a shaky ground, I always circled back to children's books. Before stubbornly deciding to quit drawing, I was either working in one children's bookstore or another, or going to my library's picture book section in my spare time. I studied books and children's publishing even though I was in school for very serious painting. After reading Leonard S. Marcus's *Dear Genius*, Ursula Nordstrom became my hero. The weekend I moved to New York, Phil and I walked down 18th Street and into Books of Wonder. In an uncharacteristically aggressive move, I begged for a job from a staff who would later become my friends. All of these friends still work in children's books, and many of them are published by Roaring Brook Press—including George, who first told Neal I was an artist whether or not I thought I was. Nick Bruel, Jason Chin,

Julie Fogliano, George O'Connor, and others are all diverse, inspiring, funny, and caring friends. They sat me down with a stack of picture books and they taught me how to sell them. Discussing and reading with these colleagues was some of the best education I have ever had. They have encouraged Philip and me and helped us out along the way, and I wish they could all be here with me.

The friends I have met at the bookstore and in publishing have taught me to see children's books through an arc of time. The first night I met Neal Porter and he was speaking to me about books, it was as though he was speaking about that same arc. I believe the best books translate through time because they tug at something true within us. If I truly believe that, then the only way I can make a book is to try to be completely honest in the pictures.

It's a scary proposition for me and probably will continue to be for a long time. When I draw honestly, I feel like I leave myself exposed a little on the page. I try to draw who I am. Drawing is an act that makes me feel vulnerable, but also one that completes me.

And so, without Philip and Neal, I wouldn't have believed I could make this little book and do it well. For the year it took me to complete the art for *Amos*, I hid behind both of them and relied on them to believe in me when I couldn't.

Neal proved his belief by being gently unobtrusive. He told me I could "contact him as little or as much as I saw fit." That's a lot of trust for a first-time illustrator. Neal has always been respectful of Phil and me and our ideas, whether or not we deserve it. I may not always be confident, but I am incredibly stubborn. I have very strong opinions about my books. Neal accepts that somehow, while asking polite questions that may prove my opinions wrong. He continues to be outrageously patient with my process, allowing me to disappear for long stretches. When I surface, he's there and extremely generous with his time.

This awareness of my personality allows me to grow a little as a person. And if I am a better person, I am a better artist. I am overwhelmingly thankful this editor

found me and continues to work with me. The artist/editor relationship can feel one-sided. It's always me who needs something (a phone call, a deadline extension, a therapist). So I am grateful to Neal that he allows me to call him my friend, and a dear one at that.

Philip says he wrote the story of Amos McGee specifically for me. When I was shown the very first draft on a legal pad, there was no doubt. I was very pleased to meet these characters. They immediately felt like friends I had known for a long time. But each character also felt like extensions of me. No one knows me better than Phil. So when he writes a story specifically for me, I am able to draw in a natural way. I am very lucky.

Phil met me when I was just barely sixteen and he was about to graduate from high school. We often thank our lucky schedules that we were in the same art

room at the same time. Within the first few meetings, Phil told me he wanted to be a children's book illustrator and I remember being stunned. I was stunned because he had the guts to say out loud at seventeen what I had been secretly thinking for years, and say it with a determination I had rarely seen in adults. You just cannot doubt Phil Stead.

"Books are my home. When I walk into a bookstore, or a library, or crack the spine of a new book, I am home. These are personal experiences to me because there are people behind all of them."

From that moment on, we have been together.

Today, we work at two different desks in one room. Phil is my best critic and nothing leaves the studio without his approval. Once a story for me is set, he allows me into the writing process and will change a text based on what I'm drawing. I love

working on books together. But I also love watching him work. It is inspiring to share a studio with someone whose art I truly admire. For an incalculable number of reasons, many of them too personal to share, I am fortunate Phil kept talking to the top of my head because I was too shy to look at him in high school. I am fortunate, too, because eventually I spoke back. He is my greatest friend.

I am a little less fragile now and settling into my instincts with bookmaking. I am very young. I still have doubts. But they are outweighed by true friends (and maybe a heavy medal).

Books are my home. When I walk into a bookstore, or a library, or crack the spine of a new book, I am home. These are personal experiences to me because there are people behind all of them. And so, I try to make personal experiences. I will continue to try to

continued on page 51

"Wabby, more stuffed bunny than real rabbit, is an endearing, if slightly goofy hero...the book's message, 'to everything there is a season,' is a good one!"
- Booklist



"...everything children's music should be: funny, warm, a little bit silly and very comforting."
- Parents Magazine



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Kevin Roth, singer of the hit PBS TV show *Shining Time Station*, based on Thomas the Tank Engine.

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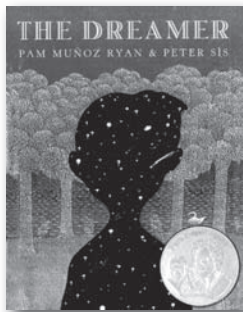


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Pura Belpré Author Award Acceptance Speech

All People Are Connected

Pam Muñoz Ryan



*Pam Muñoz Ryan is the winner of the Pura Belpré Author Award for *The Dreamer*, illustrated by Peter Sís, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.*

Thank you to the American Library Association, ALSC, and REFORMA, and especially to Martha Walke and her 2011 committee. I am thrilled that you chose *The Dreamer* and feel privileged to be in the company of such fine writers and artists.

Ten years ago, in 2001, I received my first Pura Belpré Medal for *Esperanza Rising*. The Pura Belpré award was young then—only a kindergartner. And even though the award already had a toehold of growing respect and support, the ceremony was nonetheless sparsely attended.

Four years later, in 2005, I received the Pura Belpré Honor for *Becoming Naomi Leon*. By that time, the ceremony was more prominent, and the celebration had grown to include music and singing. The festivities quickly garnered a reputation for being not only an awards ceremony, but a fiesta in the true Latino sense of the word, and one not to be missed.

Today, at its Quinces, the Pura Belpré Medal has come of age. I am heartened to see that so many people from the greater publishing community are here to share this day with me and my colleagues.

My book *The Dreamer* is also a coming-of-age story about a boy, Neftalí Reyes. One event in young Neftalí's life seduced me to write *The Dreamer*—the incident of the hole in the fence, when an unknown child in the backyard next door passed him an old toy sheep through an opening in the wood planks. Neftalí reciprocated with a treasured possession, a pinecone from the Araucanian forest. He never discovered who passed him the sheep, or to whom he passed the pinecone. But even after he grew up and changed his name to Pablo Neruda, he reflected and wrote about this moment. For him, it became a lifelong reminder that all people were somehow connected.

He wrote,

That exchange brought home to me . . . a precious idea: that all of humanity is somehow together. . . . Just as I once left the pinecone by the fence, I have since left my words

on the door of so many people who were unknown to me, people in prison, or hunted, or alone. . . . Maybe this small and mysterious exchange of gifts remained inside me . . . deep and indestructible, giving my poetry light

Initially, I wrote this story as a picture book for older readers. I worked with my editor, Tracy Mack, on and off for over a year, finished what I thought was the final rewrite, and sent it off. I gathered up all of the books I'd checked out from the library and returned them. I put all of my research notes in a box, labeled it, and put it in a closet. I felt like a mother who had finally put an errant three-year-old child to bed, tucked it in, turned off the light, and said, "Buenos noches." I breathed a sigh of relief. I was ready to set my sights on my next book.

Tracy read the manuscript and conferred with our creative director, David Saylor. She called a few weeks later and said, "David had a brainstorm, and I agree with him and we have a suggestion for a new approach to the manuscript." These are not the words you want to hear when you think you are finished with a book. She asked me to consider reworking the book, and expanding it into a novel.

What? I had put it to bed!

As I listened to their rationale, I had the sinking feeling that she and David were right. But I knew that this change would mean going back to square one, physically and emotionally. I admit, I shed a few frustrated tears. Ultimately though, I was convinced, and I discovered that the book was not asleep, at all. It wanted another drink of water. It needed more than "one more story." It was scared and wanted to be rocked. It was cold. It was hot. It wanted a night light. And a lullaby. It was another two-and-a-half years before it allowed me to pull the covers beneath its chin, and kiss it good night.

While I rewrote *The Dreamer*, I focused on the elements in Neruda's young life that I hoped would resonate with particular readers—his strained relationship with his father, his struggle for independence, his painful shyness, his escape into fantastical worlds, and, especially,

his suspicion and hope that there was something yet to be discovered about himself that was magnificent—something that he had to share.

I think that young readers need to feel that they can still become something they've never been before. That there is something splendid dwelling inside, some talent or ability yet unknown. I often envisioned middle grade boys and girls as the potential readers—brooding adolescents, who might feel misunderstood and might be closet poets, artists, scientists, or musicians, who are too embarrassed to speak their heart.

I was together with my sister and a group of my cousins recently, and we became hysterical with laughter while reminiscing about my grandmother, Esperanza, and how she used to embarrass us, sometimes to tears. If she had any one of us girls with her at the market, church, or walking in the neighborhood, and she stopped to talk to someone she knew, or didn't know, she'd pull us forward and say, "Hello Mrs. Gonzales. This is my granddaughter. Isn't she beautiful?" Oh, how we wanted to crawl into a hole!

But it did not matter one bit to my Grandmother. She would tell the bus driver, a sales clerk, the mail carrier, or a passerby. And she was pleased with herself and expected an affirmation.

Once, when I was an awkward, acne-ridden adolescent, who had not yet grown into my nose or my feet, I was with my grandmother at Mr. Louey's market, standing in front of the meat counter. She shoved me front and center and said, "Mr. Louey, this is my granddaughter. Isn't she beautiful?"

Mr. Louey said nothing, smirked, and handed her a roast wrapped in white paper, and turned away. It was clear he did not see anything special in front of him. The butcher had dismissed me.

I was paralyzed with embarrassment. My grandmother grabbed my hand, pulled me away and, in the bizarre way she sometimes translated Spanish to English, said, "Do not worry. He does not see the bones of you."



Pam Muñoz Ryan (center) with Lucia Gonzalez (left), 2010-2011 REFORMA president, and Julie Corsaro (right), 2010-2011 ALSC president during the Belpré Award Celebration in New Orleans. Photo Credit: Alexandra and Michael Buxbaum.

At that age, I remember thinking that of course he couldn't see my bones. I was covered with flesh and skin and clothing. I remember thinking that my grandmother was ridiculous and infuriating. Now, I know she meant that he could not see my core, the essence of me, the potential in me.

I cannot help but feel that the Pura Belpré committee and this luminous medal are like my proud grandmother, a persistent compliment. The award nudges the books forward. It suggests that the literary community pay attention to the Latino experience. It points out that there is something special here, that should not be dismissed. It promises that someone might see the bones of us.

I can't imagine this book's journey without my editor, Tracy Mack, who always saw the potential in this book, shared my vision, and was unfailingly supportive. My gratitude spills over for the compliment of Peter Sís's art. And now I can wholeheartedly appreciate David Saylor for his brainstorm. I thank him, along with his department, and Charles Kreloff, for their art direction and beautiful bookmaking.

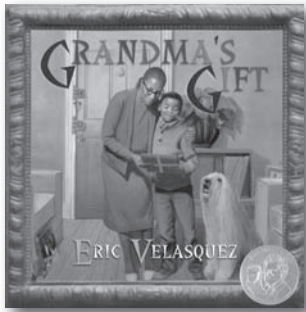
I do not want to miss this opportunity to thank my Scholastic family: Tracy Van Straaten, Lizette Serrano, John Mason and

their teams, and the Scholastic sales reps. In that odd and insecure window of time when the manuscript was finished, but not yet published, they invested their expertise and enthusiasm in my book, before reviewers, before readers, before committees.

Pablo Neruda believed that the profession of writing was isolating and that only after someone read his words could a communion take place. It is often the same for all of us. We don't always know whose lives we will touch. We hope that someone will admire our illustrations, will use the knowledge we left behind, emulate our actions, consider our views, wield our hammer, live in the house we built, eat the bread we baked, learn from our skills, appreciate our endeavors. The passing of our respective gifts to those we know, or will never meet, is our spiritual union with humanity.

I feel fortunate to be in this profession of writing for children and young adults. I hope that I'll continue to have the opportunity to pass my work through a hole in the fence. And that possibly, many years from now, an aspiring teacher will take a children's literature class and will be assigned to read a Pura Belpré book. I hope, if that student chooses *The Dreamer*, that at that distant time and place, our souls will meet.

Un mil gracias. 🍷



Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Acceptance Speech

Remembering Grandma

Eric Velasquez



Eric Velasquez is the winner of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award for Grandma's Gift, illustrated and written by Eric Velasquez, published by Walker Publishing, a division of Bloomsbury. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.

This is truly a gift, and a reason to celebrate. First, I would like to thank the Pura Belpré Award Selection Committee for honoring me with this award.

I would also like to thank my editor, Emily Easton, for believing in this book as well as for her support and friendship over the years.

Thank you also to Nicole Gastonguay and Donna Mark for helping design *Grandma's Gift*, and a big hug and thanks to the staff at Walker/Bloomsbury who continue to make our working relationship a complete joy. Furthermore, I would like to thank the woman who is constantly by my side, Elizabeth, for her love, support, and willingness.

Grandma's Gift is part of a journey that started long ago in my Grandma's apartment in *El Barrio*—Spanish Harlem, New York City.

Although I did not realize it at the time, Grandma was preparing me to be an artist. With her passionate love of music, cooking, and sewing, Grandma instilled in me the notion of always doing your best, as well as the importance of finding love in everything you do.

The story of *Grandma's Gift* began ten years ago when I wrote and illustrated *Grandma's Records*. Since that time, I have received numerous letters from grandparents thanking me for helping them bridge the gap between grandparent and grandchild.

Grandparents who read my book began sharing their phonograph records and family history with their grandchildren. I would often read, "Thank you for the gift" in regards to the newfound connection to their grandchildren. This, of course, started me thinking about another story.

I had the perfect model for Grandma in *Grandma's Records*, my mother who posed for the photo reference as her own mom.

The experience of working with my mother brought us closer together, and I could not wait to repeat the experience with another story about Grandma.

I wrote *Grandma's Gift* in between illustration projects over a period of years, while dealing with a host of personal setbacks.

Soon after Walker/Bloomsbury agreed to publish *Grandma's Gift*, my mom suddenly passed away. For a moment, I thought the project had ended. How can I do another Grandma book without my star model? However, I thought of my mother and grandmother and decided to forge ahead.

It was always my intention for *Grandma's Gift* to be a prequel to *Grandma's Records*. In this book I wanted to show a different side of Grandma, and explain where the sketchbook came from. Nevertheless, since I work from photographs, I needed a model; I really needed a model fast. Therefore I began working on the book dummy while trying to solve this problem.

After completing the drawings in the book dummy, I realized that I knew someone that can pose as Grandma for my photo-reference. But how could I approach her with this request? So, I gathered up the courage, and I boldly asked my girlfriend, Elizabeth, to pose as my Grandmother and she agreed. Paging Dr. Freud!

Although considerably younger, I decided to cast Elizabeth as Grandma because she embodied a different aspect of my Grandma—a more outgoing spirit, one I would see in Grandma during the holidays. Elizabeth's family is from Santurce, Puerto Rico, where Grandma was from. Elizabeth's dad was my mom's childhood friend, and Elizabeth had known my mom for about two years. While helping her dad reunite with his childhood friend, Elizabeth became familiar with Grandma's philosophy through my mom.

Moreover, she perfectly understood the essence of Grandma that I was attempting to portray in this book.

I then hired a boy to pose as me in the story and set a date for the photo shoot. While attending Thanksgiving dinner with my family, Kayson walked into my life. Kayson's mom is my cousin, Selenia,

who I had not seen in over thirty years. I could not believe how much Kayson resembled a young version of me, so much so that I would refer to him as mini-me, a term he did not seem to mind. Aside from being handsome, the boy is smart and has a great sense of style. Unfortunately, I had to fire my original model, but I was completely delighted to see how well Kayson took direction during the photo shoot, a real natural.

In creating the images for *Grandma's Gift*, I wanted to show the special relationship my Grandma and I shared.

For the bus scene, for example, I illustrated the boy translating the teacher's note to Grandma while riding a New York City bus as various Latinos look on. The scene depicts how much we depended on each other. I was Grandma's official translator, and she was mine.

By illustrating images of Grandma making *pasteles*, our traditional Puerto Rican dish created by our African and Indian ancestors, I intended to convey a sense of having a grandmother that connects you to a world that came before you.

Our *pasteles* are secret recipes handed down from generation to generation. It was important for me to show how much Grandma loved making *pasteles*. Therefore I carefully depicted each step in the process of making this dish with the understanding that this dish is slowly disappearing from our culture because not enough people are sharing the recipe. I wanted to demystify the secret and share it.

All of the illustrations were painted in oil on watercolor paper. It is very important for me as an illustrator to portray the people and places in a realistic manner. Historically, images of people who look like me have been caricatured and distorted, something that I have always



Eric Velasquez (center) with Lucia Gonzalez (left), 2010-2011 REFORMA president, and Julie Corsaro (right), 2010-2011 ALSC president during the Belpré Award Celebration in New Orleans. Photo Credit: Alexandra and Michael Buxbaum.

been aware of and sensitive to for most of my life.

The second half of the book involves a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the magnificent portrait of Juan de Pareja by Diego Velázquez. It was a special moment for me because I believe it was that moment, while staring at that painting, that I decided to become an artist—especially when Grandma told me that Juan de Pareja was also an artist. Curiously enough, I have never felt an ancestral connection to Diego Velázquez aside from that as a painter.

That day in the museum was the first time I saw a painting of someone who looked like me that was not a caricature or a distorted image. It was even the most expensive painting in the world at the time. Wow, this was a painting of a black man.

For twenty-seven years, I have been an illustrator, concentrating the last fifteen

years on illustrating picture books and telling stories. My greatest joy is painting images of my people—the creators of so much music, art, food, and history.

My Grandma was from Santurce, Puerto Rico—“*Somos Cortado de los primeros*,” she would always say, meaning that our ancestors were on the island before Columbus.

Grandma taught me to be proud of my African heritage as well. Since Africans are also considered to be among the first in Santurce (originally an Afro-Caribbean settlement), before the world changed, as jim crow [sic] was introduced to Puerto Rico.

Therefore I could think of no greater honor, to honor my grandmother and my mother's memory than to accept this award for illustrating *Grandma's Gift* than an award named after a woman from Santurce, Puerto Rico, known as Pura Belpré. *Gracias, Ache.* 🍷



Wilder Award Acceptance Speech

Portrait of a Young Boy . . . and His Dreams Come True

Tomie dePaola

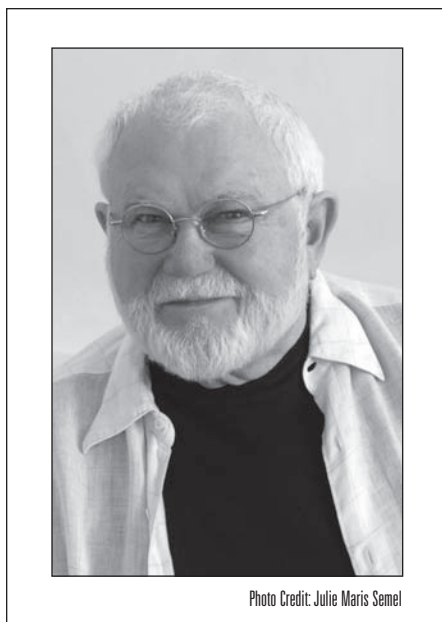


Photo Credit: Julie Maris Semel

Tomie dePaola is the winner of the 2011 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.

This whole thing started when I was only four years old. Some relatives came to visit us in Meriden, Connecticut, where we lived.

My older brother, Joseph Jr., who was nicknamed Buddy, was the firstborn. So he was “super child,” the heir apparent. I, four years younger, was “the mistake.”

My brother was asked, “Buddy, what do you want to be when you grow up?”

“I want to be Dick Tracy, Joe Palooka, and Buck Rogers,” Buddy answered.

Great, I thought. He wants to be a comic strip.

Even though no one asked *me*, I announced, “When I grow up, I am going to be an artist. I’m going to write stories and draw pictures for books, and I’m going to sing and tap dance on the stage.”

You see, I had twin cousins who were in art school. They were very glamorous. My mother read to me every night, and I loved books. And I was a *huge* fan of Shirley Temple movies.

Every chance I got over the next few years, I would tell the grownups around me what the future held for me, and they all took me seriously.

Mrs. Beulah Bowers, the art teacher who came to our school periodically, made sure I got extra pieces of paper and could use my own crayons.

Miss Leah Grossman, my tap-dancing teacher, gave me special roles in the annual recital, so in my heart I could rival Shirley Temple. Then when I was older and paired with Carol Morrissey, my dancing partner, we were Meriden’s answer to Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland.

My grandfather was a butcher and owned a grocery store. His response was to give me a small roll of white butcher paper and a Listo Pencil (“It Can Write on Anything”), so I could draw to my heart’s content and not on the sheets under the covers of my bed.

My parents, Flossie and Joe, and my uncle Charles were the best. Uncle Charles asked me one time when we were alone,

“So, you really want to be an artist?” I answered, “Yes.” He grabbed the Sunday comics that were lying around and said, “Can you copy the Katzenjammer Kids?”

“Uncle Charles,” I answered, “Franny and Fuffy [my Irish twin cousins who were artists and had recently graduated from Pratt Institute] told me to practice, practice, practice and *never* copy. Ask me to draw something else and I will.”

After I finished my drawing, Uncle Charles took it into the kitchen, and I could hear him talking to my mother. “He’s good. We have to do something about this,” he said.

* * * * *

Segue to Christmas morning, 1945, when I was eleven.

Because I had two younger sisters, Santa Claus still came to our house. So the best presents were under the tree Christmas morning.

I remember it so clearly. There under the tree were my gifts—all art supplies, books on how to draw, paints, pads, and even an easel. I was set to go!

* * * * *

Let me back up a little. Mrs. Cowing, the “liberry lady,” came every Friday morning to King Street School. The third through sixth grades would go to the “liberry” room on the second floor where they could check out two or three books for a week.

I first noticed Mrs. Cowing in first grade. I’d see her park her old jalopy in front of school and then call some older boys to help her unload boxes of books and bring them to the “liberry.” I found out that certain kids would be chosen to be “liberry” monitors, and they would help Mrs. Cowing set out the books. And sometimes Mrs. Cowing would bring special books just for the monitors. I had a goal: I would become a “liberry” monitor. I had almost two years to work on this.

Nothing works quite as well as charm, and *I had plenty of that*. I’d stand so she could see me when she drove up.

I'd smile and say, "Hello, Liberry Lady." She'd wave back. One day she came over to me, smiling.

"Little boy," she whispered. "It's pronounced *library*."

"Hello, *Library* Lady," I said the next week. She blew me a kiss.

By the time I was in second grade, even though I couldn't be a monitor, I could

And any time a student wanted to spend time after school doing art, Miss Goldman welcomed us with open arms.

Miss Cole, the school librarian, was always happy to recommend just the right books. She encouraged me to read everything from Lewis Carroll to Robert Louis Stevenson to Alcott, Dickens, and the Brontës to Armstrong Sperry and—yes—*Gone with the Wind*. She introduced me to the illustrations of

I so admired the illustration work of Alice and Martin Provensen, Sheilah Beckett, Feodor Rojankovsky, Leo Lionni, and of course this new guy who put little boys in ballet slippers in his illustrations for Ruth Krauss's *I'll Be You and You Be Me*, Maurice . . . Sondheim, or . . . Steinbeck—you know who I mean.

I wouldn't have had the success that I did at Pratt if it weren't for my painting instructors, Roger Crossgrove and

"My mentor Ben Shahn said the words that have meant the most to me: Being an artist is not only what you do, but how you live your life."

help carry in books. I could bend her ear a little about how much I loved books.

In September, it came as no surprise when Miss Bailey, my third grade teacher, read out that I would be a *library* monitor.

On Friday mornings I would meet the jalopy, carry boxes of books up to the library room, and set books out on tables, all the time taking a peek inside the covers.

Because I was a monitor, I would be there all morning. I got to peek at fourth grade books, fifth grade books, and sixth grade books. What glorious Fridays! For the next three years, I'd hang around and talk with Mrs. Cowing. She put into my hands *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field with illustrations by Dorothy Lathrop, *Make Way*

Rackham, Tenniel, Doyle, Kay Nielsen, Edward Kemble, and countless others. And I could check out all the books I wanted.

In eighth grade, we had a class called guidance. We had to write a biography of someone in the profession we might aspire to. I chose Grant Wood. I even stated that I wanted to attend Pratt Institute.

* * * * *

High school was easy. I was really good at English, history, social studies, music (I hadn't lost any of my singing and dancing abilities), art, of course, and French. Dr. Michel, my French teacher, introduced me to the works of the Impressionists, Picasso, Matisse, and many others.

Federico Castellon. Richard Lindner and Enrico Arno taught illustration.

In 1955, I received a summer scholarship to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. It was there that I met the mentor of all time, Ben Shahn. He said to me the words that have meant the most to me: Being an artist is not only what you *do*, but how you live your life.

* * * * *

Then I took a brief detour. I was now an artist, but instead of becoming a children's book illustrator as well as a painter, I decided to become a monk—a Benedictine monk, a Benedictine artist-monk. And so after graduation from Pratt, I entered a small, very primitive Benedictine monastery in the Green Mountains of Vermont.

"Nothing works quite as well as charm, and I had plenty of that."

for *Ducklings* and *Homer Price* by Robert McCloskey, and the beautiful books by the d'Aulaires.

She pointed out the books that had won Newbery and Caldecott Medals. What riches Mrs. Cowing gave me.

* * * * *

Junior high was everything I had hoped for. We had art three times a week with Miss Goldman. She taught painting techniques, puppetry, jewelry-making—all sorts of things.

I was awarded an important scholarship from the city of Meriden. Pratt was a certainty.

I was the best artist in my high school. But at Pratt Institute in 1952, I was suddenly in a freshman class with 500 other best artists in their high schools. Only 125 would make it to sophomore year. Miraculously, I made it.

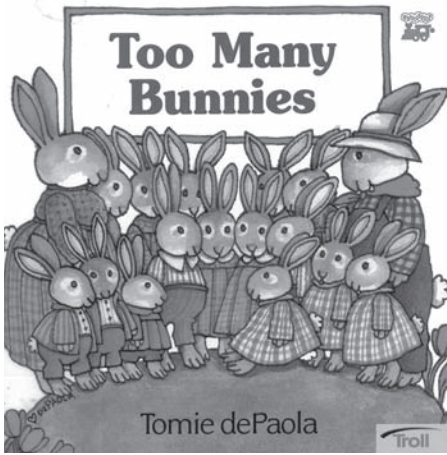
My idols ranged from Norman Rockwell and Jon Whitcomb (known for his "pretty girl" illustrations), to Rouault, Matisse, Modigliani, and Ben Shahn.

Needless to say, I didn't stay. *The silence got to me*. So with the blessings of the Prior, I left to be just an artist. That was 1957.

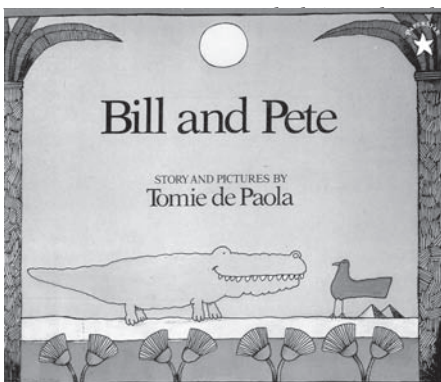
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Yearly, I would take the bus from Vermont to New York to show my portfolio to publishers. The editors—most of them—were really nice. I was told over and over, "If you ever move back to New York . . ."

I spent the years painting, designing Christmas cards, and doing set design for the summer theater in my small



“I call little four-year-old Tomie to sit on my lap when I write and when I draw. He tells me what is true.”



good commissions, too, and I was producing a modestly successful card line.

* * * * *

In 1963, I moved back to New York.

Then a miracle happened. I met Florence Alexander. She was an artist’s representative. When I brought her my portfolio, she said, after looking at the hot pink and orange tigers and other creative stuff, “Dear, I’ll need some more samples—samples of children waving at fire trucks, mothers ironing. You know, ordinary things.”

I wanted to draw foreign-looking little boys wearing ballet slippers like Maurice Sendak did. I said I’d work on it and get back to her. I figured three weeks would be long enough and then I’d call her and pick up my portfolio.

It didn’t work that way. Florence called me before I had a chance to call her. “Hello, dear,” she said. “Hi-ho, hi-ho, I think it’s off to work we go. Can you be at my office tomorrow around ten?”

“Of course,” I answered.

“Good,” she replied, “and by the way do you have those new samples ready?”

I muttered some false excuse.

* * * * *

The next morning at the office I met the person who gave me my big break. Her name was Bernice Kohn—now Hunt. She was starting a new list of science picture books for Coward-McCann. She was doing the writing, and there would be two books each list. Four in a year. She wanted an established illustrator for one and a newcomer for the other. I was possibly going to be the “newbie.” I was asked to do a couple of samples.

During the process, Bernice became a dear, dear friend. So did Florence and also the in-house editor at Coward-McCann, Margaret Frith. I worked with Margaret at Coward and eventually at Putnam for forty-some years.

Well, it all began! I got the job. But there was a hitch. I also had a job for ten weeks

in Provincetown for—you guessed it—a musical revue in which I would sing and dance on the stage.

Okay—the deadline would work. I had to produce the dummy, the sketch form with words in place. No problem. I had until September.

So there I was in Provincetown, dancing and singing at night and working on the illustrations for my first book, *Sound*, during the day.

I heard four-year-old Tomie saying, “When I grow up, I’m going to be an artist. I’m going to write stories and draw pictures for books, and sing and dance on the stage.” Suddenly, this was my life!

* * * * *

Sound was reviewed in *The New York Times Book Review* when it was published a year and a half later. “Good facts, but the illustrations by first time illustrator dePaola are far too imaginative for a science book.”

“Far too imaginative.” I was *thrilled*, and so was Bernice. Florence was energized, and the jobs started rolling in. The next was from Jeanne Vestal at Lippincott.

Don’t worry. I’m not going through all 250 titles. But I *am* going to mention some of the people who guided me through this complicated, fickle, dangerous, and exalting field of children’s books.

Mary Russell at Bobbs-Merrill taught me to write with martinis. Eunice Holsaert told me I had stories to tell. Ellen Roberts and Sue Jennings helped me give birth to *Strega Nona*. Barbara Lucas published *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* at Putnam and then *The Clown of God* at Harcourt.

Margery Cuyler let me explore my Catholic childhood. John and Kate Briggs of Holiday House not only published my books but partied with me, too. Maria Modugno was like my much-younger little sister when I first met her. There were others, too—all wonderful people.

Nanette Stevenson was my first art director at Putnam. Cecilia Yung is my art director now and my muse, and Marikka Tamura is my designer of choice.

I have the best publisher in the world—Penguin Putnam. I love everyone there so much—David Shanks, Doug Whiteman, Don Weisberg, Jen Haller, Emily Romero, and Felicia Frazier, to name a few. They are all in my heart.

And I have a new editor, Nancy Paulsen, and even though I'm an old guy, I know I still have more books in me.

I wouldn't be up here if not for all of you who have gotten my books into the hands of children over the forty-plus years that I've been doing what I do.

Thank you, Millie Nichols, Carolyn Field, Augusta Baker, Pura Belpré, Effie Lee Morris, Ann Kalkhoff, Caroline Ward, June Level, Barbara Elleman, Grace Ruth, Norine Odland, Carolyn Brodie, Elizabeth Bird, and all my other friends in ALA. A piece of this medal belongs to all of you.

So, you can see that with *me* it didn't take a village—it took a metropolis.

* * * * *

At the end of the movie *Nine*, based on the Broadway show and the Fellini film *8½*, little Guido runs down this huge set to sit on the lap of "old" Guido as the camera crane moves up. Filming is about to begin.

This is what I do. I call little four-year-old Tomie to sit on my lap when I write and when I draw. He tells me what is true.

* * * * *



2011 Wilder Committee chair Megan Schliesman and Tomie dePaola at the Newbery Caldecott Wilder Banquet, June 26, 2011. Photo Credit: Alexandra and Michael Buxbaum.

I know you all like to hear about "The Call." Mine came on Sunday night, January 9. I was having my annual holiday party, and the house was filled with over seventy people. Fortunately, I was standing by the bar waiting for a drink. The phone was right there. It rang, and I answered it through the din. The voice said, "You might want to take this call."

I retreated into my bedroom, and Megan gave me the news! I was totally blown away. The Wilder Award was not on my radar. I started to cry and told the committee that their taste was impeccable. But then I was told I had to keep it a secret until the next day. I could tell my assistant, Bob Hechtel, but no one else.

That was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. I wanted to run back to the party and yell, "Drinks on the house!"

* * * * *

Little Tomie joins me in saying "thank you" to Bob for everything you do and especially to the committee—Megan Schliesman, JoAnn Jonas, Andrew Medlar, Martha V. Parravano, and Angela J. Reynolds—who chose to honor me with this award.

* * * * *

I am extremely humbled and totally grateful.

You have given me and my work eternity. &

Call for Referees

To make *Children and Libraries* a truly interactive publication, we're looking for ALSC members to serve as volunteer referees for journal articles. Unsolicited articles and those of a scholarly nature must be submitted to at least two referees to judge the submissions on accuracy, style, impact, importance, and interest. Specialists in particular genres (such as technology, literature, intellectual freedom, programming, and so on) are especially needed.

Referees make recommendations to the editor on whether or not manuscripts should be accepted for publication. Interested librarians should contact *Children and Libraries* Editor Sharon Korbeck Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com for more information on the referee process.

The May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture

Unleaving: The Staying Power of Gold

Lois Lowry



Lois Lowry delivered the 2011 Arbuthnot Lecture Friday, April 15 at the St. Louis (Mo.) County Library.

It's a pleasure to be here this evening. Thank you all for coming, and a special thanks to the Association for Library Service to Children, which sponsors this event; to its Arbuthnot Committee, for selecting me to be with you this year; and to the St. Louis County Library for hosting this occasion. I feel as if I am in a cozy living room with a group of longtime friends. We should light a fire in the fireplace and pour some wine.

But I'll confess at the outset that when I was asked to deliver this year's May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture, one of my first (secret) reactions was "Darn!"—not because I wasn't deeply honored by the invitation, not because I didn't want to give this speech (and I confess I kind of liked the element of mystery about location), but because it fell into the category once again (this has happened before) of—how shall I describe it?—giving a lecture named for a person I never got to meet.

Darn. I think we would have liked each other. And we could have met, May and I. We could have met, say, in 1962. She would have been seventy-eight then, and probably quite vigorous—she lived to be eighty-five. I would have been twenty-five in 1962.

What would we have talked about?

My life, when I was twenty-five, centered around my children. That year, the year that I am fantasizing about a meeting with May Arbuthnot, they would have been four, three, one, and the youngest one newly born.

She never had children. But clearly she cared about them, and she would have been interested, I think, to hear about my little family, and our collection of books—some from my own childhood—and how we curled up in the evenings, and I read aloud to them. She would have enjoyed hearing how the oldest, a girl, at four, suddenly leaned closer and pointed to a word—the word "LOOK"—on the page from which I was reading. Then she moved her finger back a few paragraphs, and found it again, the word "LOOK," and she said, in a voice of amazed discovery, that it was the same word that was printed on the street, at the corner where we crossed to go to the

grocery store—the same word, with its two big circles like eyes, telling you to "LOOK!"

"I can read this word!" my daughter said with delight, at four. And it wasn't long until she put it together in her head, the sounds of the letters, how they went together and formed words. I think May Arbuthnot would enjoy hearing about that. After all, she was one of the ones who wrote the Dick and Jane books, the books of my own first grade. They used the "L" word a lot. I seem to recall a lot of pointing in the illustrations. "Look!" said Dick, pointing at Father with a rake. "Look!" said Jane, pointing at baby Sally, or Puff, the kitten.

(I always wished, actually, that their pointing fingers would be aimed at something a little more interesting. "Look! A man robbing the bank!" said Dick. Or "Look!" said Mother, "the house is on fire!" But those were different times.)

"Look! Look! Look! I can read this word!" From there my daughter went to *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, and to the realization that every one of those books, of those stories she loved, was made up of letters and sounds and words. And then, when she was five, I found her one day curled on the floor with a volume of the encyclopedia opened to a picture that fascinated her, index finger moving slowly along the syllables as she sounded out *Ex . . . ter . . . nal . . . Gen . . . i . . . tal . . . ia*.

No, I guess I won't tell May about that. I don't know her well enough.

But I think I would mention 1947 to her. 1947 was a momentous year not only for her but for a previous Arbuthnot lecturer, and for me, as well.

In 1947, the first edition of May Hill Arbuthnot's ground-breaking *Children and Books* was published. She was sixty-three years old.

In 1947, a physics text called *Atomics for the Millions* by Dr. Maxwell Leigh Eidinoff, was also published. It was illustrated by Maurice Sendak. He was nineteen years old.

And in 1947, a children's magazine called *Jack and Jill* published a letter from a little girl in Pennsylvania who said, "I am writing a book." Her name was Lois. I was ten years old.

* * * * *

In late January, I was in New York for a conference, and I had enough free time that I caught up with a favorite nephew named Michael. Michael's a smart guy, a Harvard graduate with a lovely wife and a good job. What he really wants to be, though, is a playwright. He spends his spare time attending playwriting workshops and writing new plays and revising plays he wrote two years ago, or ten years ago; and every now and then something Michael has written is produced off-off-off Broadway briefly. But writing plays is a very tough profession. Over lunch he confessed that sometimes he thinks he should just quit. Forget about it. Take up a new hobby.

Of course someone with his passion—or mine—can't and doesn't quit. Michael and I talked about why we do what we do.

"I just feel the need to record everything," Michael said. "Take it down." He looked through the windows—we were sitting in a restaurant near the New York Public Library, looking out toward a park—and said, "I want to record that woman in the striped coat. And that baby in the stroller . . . and this!" He touched the cement shelf beside us, below the window, on the wall of the restaurant—"I want to make a record that this exists, this piece of cement."

I knew what he meant. Michael is one of the people Henry James was referring to when he said that a writer is someone on whom nothing is lost.

Our conversation digressed then because we had family gossip to catch up on, but had we continued talking about the writer's need to take it all down, I think we would have agreed that our need is not just for the recording of things, but also for the finding of the meaning of things, and the connections. And here I'll quote not James, but E. M. Forster: "Only connect!" Everyone recognizes that phrase, but so few people recall its

context. Forster said: "Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer."

The connections, the making sense of things, the giving meaning to things—and then, the giving of all of it to readers—that is the passionate need of the writer.

* * * * *

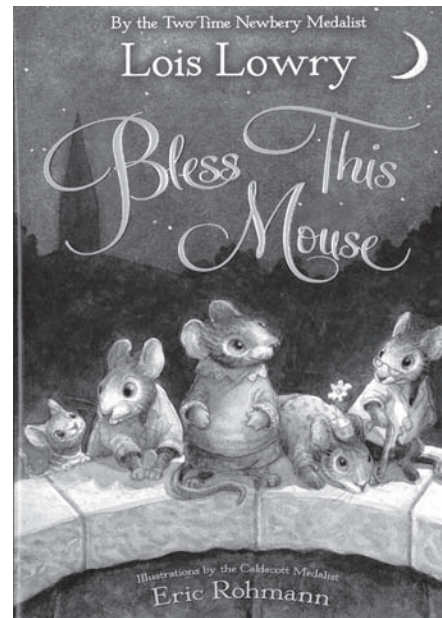
The same little girl, the daughter I described earlier, the one who was four when I was twenty-five, was with me the morning that I got the news of my sister's death. My sister lived in Texas when she was stricken with cancer at the age of twenty-seven, but that fall, terminally ill, she had been moved to a hospital in Washington, D.C. I lived in Massachusetts and was expecting my fourth child momentarily. My doctor, my husband, my parents—everyone—told me not to go to Washington. I should wait until after the baby was born. There would be time.

So I waited. And on a crisp fall morning my last child, my son, Ben, arrived. My sister sent me a card from her hospital bed in Washington that arrived when I was still in my hospital bed in Boston. I wept when I saw how frail and shaky her signature was.

But it turned out that there wasn't time. One day, suddenly, it was over, and she was gone. I had not had a chance to be with her. My little girl asked me again and again why I was so sad, and I would try to explain to her by telling her the story of two sisters—how the older one taught the little one to read; how they got into mischief together; how they wore matching dresses; how they giggled at night in their side-by-side beds.

But it wasn't fair, and I knew that it wasn't, to burden my own child with grief she was too young to comprehend.

So I began, instead, to tell the story of the two sisters—to tell it all the way to its incomprehensible ending—to myself. I did so over a period of years. Not obsessively. I had a busy, happy life. I had those four children, after all, and when



the youngest went off to kindergarten, I had returned to college. In my thirties, I was an absolutely passionate student of literature. Over-passionate, I think now, because I had interrupted my education when I married at nineteen and somehow felt the need to catch up. My professors must have shaken their heads, or chuckled, in private over this startlingly enthusiastic student in her thirties. If I was assigned a novel by Henry James, I not only read the novel, but then I read biographies of Henry James, and the collected letters of Henry James—and in the midst of that, the professor would assign something by, say, Willa Cather, and I'd be in the library again, reading not just the assigned novel but everything she'd ever written, and then histories of frontier Nebraska; and by now the professor would have moved on to Edith Wharton, and I had to learn about New York society and the Gilded Age, and when I realized Wharton and Henry James had been friends—well, everything pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle and I felt a happy kind of hungry all the time.

Then I went to graduate school, and was studying photography as well as literature. There were times when I tried to combine those two passions: the photography—the learning to see things, to frame them—and my love for the writers I was studying; I remember writing a paper on Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* in which I spoke of the sweeping beam of light bringing things briefly into sight, focusing on something

important, the way a camera can—to point, to say “LOOK! LOOK! Remember this. Notice this.”

I tried in my mind to illuminate my own story. I found that whenever something, often something small—a smell, a song, a turn of phrase—reminded me of my sister, Helen, I would focus on that and run through the narrative again in my mind, recording it, shaping it, examining it, connecting it, trying to make sense of it, trying to make its outcome comprehensible.

Then, in early 1976 I think it was, I received a letter from a children's book editor at Houghton Mifflin. She wondered if I would consider writing a book for young people. It surprises me now that I had never considered doing that before. I had been writing for years, and studying writing for years, and dreaming about

young people, something quite mysterious and wonderful happened. I began to hear the voices of some of those writers I had studied so assiduously for so long. All of those novels and plays and poems I had studied, all of the hours in the university library, all of the exams and papers I had written—bits and pieces surfaced and whispered to me.

Shakespeare whispered, in the voice of Prospero:

*We are such stuff as dreams are
made on*

And our little life is rounded by a sleep

and I put those words into the voice of Meg's English professor father as he tries to comfort his angry, uncomprehending daughter.

undergraduate survey course in British poetry, once—smatterings of this and that. But now here he was, and the words were right for the young fictional Meg to hear—and for me to hear as well:

Margaret, are you grieving

Over Goldengrove unleaving?

The character named Will Banks quotes that phrase to Meg in the book. Recalling the poem, writing it into the dialogue, my memories were vague. What was Goldengrove? A place of some sort. A place with an evocative name, and the poet used it metaphorically to bring to mind the dying of the leaves in autumn, the reminder that things we hold dear will inevitably disappear. It fit. I wrote the words in the voice of the elderly man, and then the concluding lines came to me:

“As I continued working on the book that would eventually be called A Summer to Die and would be my first book for young people, something quite mysterious and wonderful happened. I began to hear the voices of some of those writers I had studied so assiduously for so long. All of those novels and plays and poems I had studied, all of the hours in the university library, all of the exams and papers I had written—bits and pieces surfaced and whispered to me.”

writing for years—and I had four children to whom I had read and read and read—and I lived in a house where one stumbled over books as often as Legos and dolls and baseballs and damp mittens. But I had been writing, all that time, for adults.

With that editor's invitation, I suddenly had a place to put down the story I had been telling and retelling to myself. I rolled a piece of paper into my typewriter—anyone remember typewriters?—and began writing the story of two sisters by describing an actual scene from my memory: the day my sister, using a piece of chalk, divided our bedroom into two parts and said to me: “Keep your mess on your side; this side is mine.” I called my sister Molly. I was Meg.

As I continued working on the book that would eventually be called *A Summer to Die* and would be my first book for

“That's Shakespeare, Meg,” he says to her.

“What did he know?” she replies furiously. “He never knew Molly!”

But he did, didn't he? Shakespeare knew every form of grief. He knew how to rage, how to comfort, how to comprehend. When I let him speak through the fictional father in the book, he was speaking of course to the grieving girl—but he was speaking as well to me, and to the wide audience of readers that the book eventually found.

I had studied Shakespeare in depth for several semesters in both college and graduate school, so it wasn't surprising to have those familiar words from *The Tempest* appear in my consciousness. But now Gerard Manley Hopkins came to me, too—and when had I studied him? I could barely remember. An

It is the blight man was born for.

It is Margaret you mourn for.

And I was back in my own memories, and knew that indeed in retelling the story I was mourning for myself.

* * * * *

When I was asked, too soon (it is always too soon) for a title for this lecture, the question happened to come on the same day that I had received a somewhat startling e-mail from a stranger.

Her e-mail had to do with body art.

Full disclosure: I am not into body art. And though I am not going to ask for a show of hands from this audience, recently I read a statistic that tells me that 36 percent of people between eighteen

and twenty-nine have decorated their bodies in some way. Okay, we're talking tattoos here. And in fact, I have one child (out of four) and one grandchild (out of four) and one step-grandchild (out of five)—so far—who have done so, who have decorated themselves in that way.

But I am seventy-four. My idea of “body art” is maybe a little lipstick. Pink, probably.

I had once had an e-mail from an eighteen-year-old, asking my permission, she said, because she was uncertain how copyright law applied, to have her favorites lines from *The Giver* tattooed across her shoulder blade. I answered her a little vaguely because I didn't have a clue about the copyright question (how on earth, if it were a violation, would it be prosecuted?).

But this more recent e-mail was from a woman in her thirties. She wasn't concerned about copyright. She said she had read *A Summer to Die* more than twenty years ago, as a young girl, and it was the lines from the Hopkins poem that had haunted her ever since. They had come to have increasingly important meaning for her, and now she was planning to have them tattooed on her lower back. She wasn't asking permission. She just wanted to tell me how much the book—and those lines, not by me, but by Gerard Manley Hopkins—meant to her.

I sat at my desk after I had replied to her and thought about that woman. I didn't waste time visualizing or worrying about the outcome—how wide a lower back one might need, or what font size the body artist might use—all of that would soon be a *fait accompli* and wouldn't matter.

What I thought about—and was profoundly moved by—was the fact that many years before, an eleven-year-old girl reading a book had encountered four lines from a very complex poem by a nineteenth-century British clergyman, and because it spoke to her for reasons we'll never be privy to, she had incorporated it into her personal knowledge and understanding of the world as she continued to grow and mature.

It made me think of another poem, the one called “There Was a Child Went

Forth” by Walt Whitman, the one that begins:

There was a child went forth every day,

And the first object he look'd upon,
that object he became,

And that object became part of him
for the day

or a certain part of the day,

Or for many years or stretching
cycles of years.

Did the woman who wrote to me ever go to college? She didn't say. Had she studied literature, learned anything about Hopkins' life or work? No way to know. The only thing I know is that as a child, she went forth. She looked upon a poem. And that poem became part of her for the day and for many years and for stretching cycles of years.

We can chuckle and cringe a little at how it became literally part of her. But that's not really important, is it?

It was because of her e-mail that when I was asked shortly after that to come up with a title for this lecture, I replied “Unleaving: The Staying Power of Gold.” I was picturing in my mind the purity and gleam of words; the nuggets that a child can take from the pages of a loved book—and how they say “Look! Remember this! This connects to me!”

* * * * *

But now I want to talk a little about someone else who read my books many years ago. I want to talk about Tim Wadham, assistant director of Youth and Community Services for St. Louis County Library. I'm assuming it was Tim who pulled the necessary strings (Or greased a few palms? No, surely not that!) that made it possible for the Arbuthnot Lecture to be delivered this year in St. Louis (even though I was kind of rooting for Honolulu). Thank you, Tim.

What I want to describe goes back many years, probably twenty-six. Tim Wadham was a student at Brigham Young at the

time—I thought I remembered him being a freshman, but he corrected me yesterday and said he was actually in graduate school at the time—and he was visiting Boston, where I then lived. He called me up to tell me he was a fan of my work, and I invited him over for lunch.

(Timing is all. I wouldn't do that today. But back in 1985, I didn't have that many fans!)

So Tim and I sat and talked about children's books throughout a summer afternoon. He had been reading my Anastasia books to his younger sisters—one of whom is here tonight. (In fact, during his visit we called them up. He said, “Guess who I'm standing next to?” and they said hi to me and giggled.) What I especially remember is his describing how each time he came to a reference they didn't recognize, he expanded on it for them and it had become kind of a project.

Let me explain.

Remember a few minutes ago, in talking about a tattoo, I said *fait accompli*? Thirty years ago, I used that phrase in the first book of the series, when the Krupnik parents tell their astonished and outraged ten-year-old daughter that they are expecting another child.

“So,” said Anastasia, finally. “You're not going to change your minds?”

Her mother rubbed her middle softly. “It's too late for that, Anastasia.”

“It's a *fait accompli*,” said her father.

“You know I can't understand Greek, Daddy.”

“French,” he said.

“Well, French then. I can't understand French, either. What's a *fait accompli*? Another word for baby?”

“In this instance,” said her father, “I guess it is. A baby boy.”

The book continues, and it continues without any additional explanation. But Tim would have stopped to teach his

little sisters some French, to show them how the words actually mean an already-accomplished deed.

It became a challenge, a project, for them. When, later in the first book, Anastasia sits in a Harvard classroom and listens to her father teach—or try to teach, to a group of bored students—a Wordsworth poem, Tim found a copy of the poem for his sisters to read and talk about.

In the second book, *Anastasia Again*, Anastasia wanders into the living room one afternoon to find her father, with his eyes closed, conducting—and singing along with—the Verdi Requiem, which is playing on the stereo. Here, I'll read you this section:

Anastasia cringed. She lived in mortal fear that someday one of her friends would be there when her father was belting out the tenor solo from the Verdi Requiem, with his eyes closed and sweat on his bald head. . . .

Toward the end, at the very high part, her father stood on his tiptoes while he sang. Anastasia giggled.

He opened his eyes when it ended and bowed to Anastasia who applauded politely; then he went and switched the stereo to OFF. He wiped his damp face with his handkerchief.

"I'm always too exhausted to conduct the next section after I sing that section," he said. "How did I sound?"

"Pretty good. You're getting better, I think."

"*Inter oves lacum praesta et ab haedis me sequestra*," he said. She recognized them as some of the words he had sung. "Know what that means?"

"Nope."

"You will after you've studied Latin. It means, 'Give me a place among the sheep and separate me from the goats.'"

Anastasia laughed. "Okay," she said. "You're among the sheep."

Again, the book continued on. But Tim didn't. Tim got a recording of the Verdi requiem and played it for his little sisters, and then the Sibelius Violin Concerto because of this conversation between Anastasia and her mother:

"Men don't cry much."

"No. Men don't cry much," said her mother.

"Daddy does, sometimes. He always cries when he hears the Sibelius violin concerto."

"Sweetie, that's one of the reasons I married your dad."

I seem to recall that after reading the conversation between Anastasia and her father in which they agree that the French film called *Diabolique* is the scariest movie ever made, Tim tried but couldn't find a copy of that film in Utah. It's probably just as well.

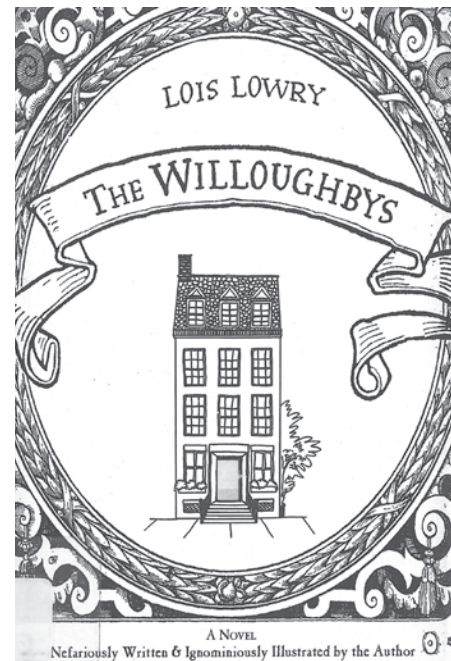
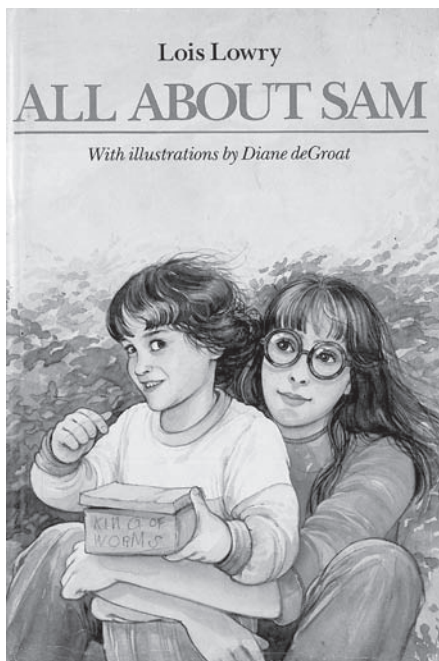
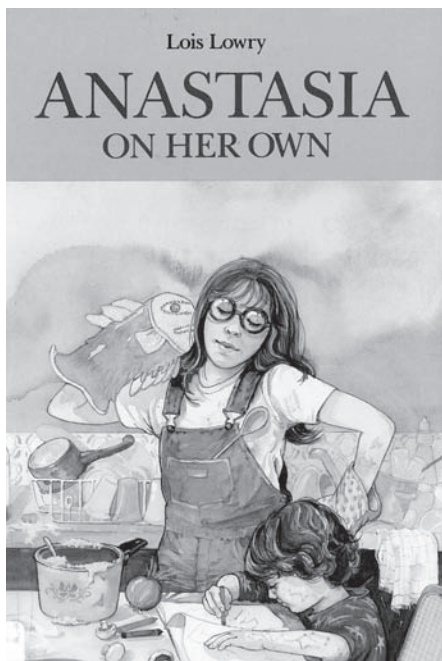
So what am I saying, beyond the fact that Tim Wadham is a good guy and was a good brother and I am pleased to be his guest here tonight?

I'm saying that his sisters—like all young readers—were like miners hunched over their pans at the edge of a creek. There were little sparkles, tiny flecks, of gold here and there. Tim's sisters—all grown up, probably untattooed—one of them may suddenly think of a Wordsworth poem, or chuckle at a reference to Gertrude Stein, or recognize a passage from a violin concerto, and perhaps not even recall the moment when that little golden nugget of knowledge became, as Whitman said, "part of the child."

* * * * *

Not long ago I got a text message from a nine-year old grandson who lives in Maine. It said: "Guess where I am at this moment."

I replied: "I don't know. Paris? Moscow? Mars?"



He texted back: “No, we went to New York for a bar mitzvah. I’m in the car heading back to Maine.”

My reply: “Long drive. Do you have a good book?”

And his: “I don’t need one. I have my iPod Touch.”

That was, to say the least, depressing. I don’t need one. I wanted to text back: “Yes, you do need a book. You need lots of books in order to become a literate, intelligent member of society.”

Instead, I replied: “Oh, good. Have a safe trip.”

But this is not a child I worry about. He lives in a world filled with books. He reads. His brother reads. His parents read. One of his grandfathers is an English professor.

He and his brother have always called me “*Oma*,” the German term for Grandma. They visit me often at my old farmhouse in rural Maine, forty miles from where they live. Last summer, I ordered a tent from L. L. Bean, and after it arrived, we staked out a place in a distant, hidden corner of a meadow and spent a week-end setting up the tent and furnishing it with battery-operated lanterns, sleeping bags, insect repellent—all the stuff two boys needed for happy summer weekends. They made the requisite NO TRESPASSING sign and nailed it to a post and hammered the post into the ground.

When they came in for supper that evening, they announced to me, “We’ve changed your name. You’re not going to be ‘*Oma*’ anymore.”

“I’m not? What’s my new name?” I asked them.

“You are Omar the Tentmaker!” they announced with glee. And indeed they have called me Omar ever since.

Now I don’t have a clue how they happened to know the name of a 1922 movie about Omar Khayyam. I doubt if they know, either. It is simply part of their accumulated knowledge, because they went forth, in the Whitmanesque sense,

as children and everything they heard and experienced became part of them.

So I don’t really worry about them and their damned iPod Touches.

But I do worry a lot about other children out there. I worry about the ones who are raised in homes without books. Whose dads are in prison. Whose moms are working two jobs. Who are living in shelters. Who are angry and frightened and poorly served by our system.

“And what if the banquet consists of literature, as mine would, as mine has? There have always been less than memorable books. There will always be celebrity biographies and novelized versions of animated movies and how-to books to help you improve your love life or your golf game. But now and then, here and there, you would find bits and pieces of pure gold.”

I worry about those children whose schools no longer have libraries. Whose towns have curtailed the hours of their public libraries, those structures of sanctuary for so many children. More than sanctuary—libraries are the repositories of our cultural heritage; when those doors close, something precious is taken away.

It reminds me of 2001, when the Taliban destroyed the ancient Buddhist statues while the world watched in horror, and the leader of the Taliban Islamic

Afghanistan at the time said, “All we are breaking are stones.”

What are we closing down, what are we breaking, when we close the doors of libraries?

A well-known poet and anthologist told me recently that he received the news—by e-mail—from his publisher that they are not going to be publishing his books any longer.

Poetry doesn’t sell.

All we are breaking is . . . fill in the blank.

* * * * *

My only granddaughter lives in Germany. She has grown up there, and attends German schools, but every summer she comes to visit her *Oma* in America (I haven’t told her that her cousins have renamed me Omar). Once when she was eleven, she brought her best friend, Annika, who had never been to the United States before. In Boston, where I live, I took them to see the Blue Man Group, the iMax theater at the science museum, and to an Italian restaurant, and to the aquarium.

Then we went to Maine. My old farmhouse there is surrounded by meadows and lakes. Bridgton, Maine, has a population of under five thousand. It has one main street, called Main Street, and on Main Street is the Bridgton Public Library.

The girls had spent hours at the beach, and they had created a puppet theater in the barn, and they had had manicures at the local nail salon. I had taken them to a dance performance at the summer theater. Then one afternoon, they came along with me while I returned some library books. In the library that afternoon, a story hour was taking place in the children’s room; the woman telling stories had a golden retriever lying at the feet. In the main section of the library, vacationing tourists were using every computer, checking their e-mail. Other people were reading newspapers and magazines. I dropped my books off, checked out a couple of others, and headed with the girls back out to the parking lot.

Annika said something in German to my granddaughter, who translated for her. “She wants to know how much it costs to use the library.”

I told them it was free.

“Free?”

Yes. Free.

“Do other towns have free libraries?” they asked.

By now we were in the car. I sat there for a minute, thinking about the geography of the area, then said, “I’m going to show you something.”

“In 1947:

- *The first edition of May Hill Arbuthnot’s groundbreaking Children and Books was published. She was sixty-three years old.*
- *A physics text called Atomics for the Millions by Dr. Maxwell Leigh Eidinoff was also published. It was illustrated by Maurice Sendak. He was nineteen years old.*
- *A children’s magazine called Jack and Jill published a letter from a little girl in Pennsylvania who said, ‘I am writing a book.’ Her name was Lois. I was ten years old.”*

First I drove them back past my house sitting in its meadow outside of town, and about two miles farther, to North Bridgton, Maine; and I stopped in front of the little white house with a front porch and its sign—North Bridgton Public Library.

About two miles from there, I pulled up in front of a little stone building with a green roof in the village of Harrison, Maine. Its sign said, “Public Library.” Harrison has a population of two thousand.

Finally, I drove about five miles along the edge of Bear Lake until we got to the little stone building that houses the Waterford

Public Library. Waterford, Maine, has a population of sixteen hundred.

After that, we stopped for ice cream and then drove home. I could hear the girls chattering in German, conferring with each other, in the back seat. Then my granddaughter said to me, “Annika and I think libraries are the best thing in the United States.”

* * * * *

Back in 1986—twenty-five years ago—I wrote a book no one remembers but me, and I remember it because it has always been one of my favorites. It was called *Rabble Starkey*. The title character is a

“The Red Pony,” he read. “That’s the title.” Then he began. . . . While Mr. Bigelow read, I could hardly take my eyes from him and from the book in his hands. . . .

I knew that each one of us could see it in our own minds. And probably we saw different things. A book with no pictures lets you make your own pictures in your mind. A guy who writes a book like that really trusts the people who read it to make the kind of pictures he wants them to. Of course he helps them along with the words. Like Mr. Steinbeck told us all about that old dog named Smasher having only one ear because the other got bit off by a coyote, and how his one good ear stood up higher than the ear on a regular coyote. So we could all picture Smasher in our minds, just the way he was supposed to be, but at the same time each of us had our own private Smasher, built out of all the dogs we had ever known.

* * * * *

My hope for these real-life kids who have so much missing in their lives is that someone, somewhere, will sit down with them the way Mr. Bigelow does and read them a story that will invite them in, and that they will create their own world—build their own private Smasher—because this is the way all of us navigate our existence. We walk into the world created by the writer, and it becomes our own world, built of words.

I’ve spoken before, and probably some of you were there when I did, about the eighth-grade boy in South Carolina whose teacher wrote to me to describe this—the disruptive underachiever, the troublemaker in the class, who, on a day when unexpected snow canceled school, called his teacher on the phone and begged her, ordered her, to read him the next chapter of *The Giver* aloud.

He had entered a fictional world and become part of it, and part of a boy like himself, a disillusioned boy who needed to find a way out of the impossible place where he was trapped—a place, incident-

twelve-year-old girl in West Virginia: a culturally-deprived (but curious) child; an at-risk (but attentive) child; the only child of a single, twenty-six-year-old mother who works as a domestic.

There is a scene in it that I love, a scene in which the young girl is read aloud to for the first time. (Imagine being twelve and never having experienced that joy!) Her friend’s father is settled in his big chair with a book, and the children are listening:

He turned through the pages until he found the story he remembered from when he was younger.

tally, from which all literature had been taken away.

I realize that in all my books, even the most lighthearted of them, I have always alluded to the power and importance of literature in our lives. I never set out consciously to do that. It creeps in, I suppose, because it has always been so much a part of me and reflects my own experience. I remember being eleven and leaving the United States to live in Japan after World War II—leaving everything familiar behind, feeling friendless and displaced—and then finding, in the little American library in Tokyo, my favorite companions: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *The Yearling*. I reread them with a sense of familiarity and comfort, having Francie and Jody with me once again.

At the end of the book *Rabble Starkey*, the young protagonist is sitting beside her mother in a car, as they drive away from the life they have known into a future that has yet to unfold. She says this:

“Remember those two books? My very favorite ones—*The Red Pony* and *The Yearling*? Both of them with a boy named Jody?”

Her mother, watching the road, nods.

“I’m just now realizing that they’re both about the same thing. About all kinds of loving, and about saying goodbye. And about moving on to where more things are in store.”

“They’re about growing older,” her mother replies.

“And growing up,” says the girl.

* * * * *

Several years ago, when one of my children was killed in a tragic accident, many of you wrote to me. I kept—and value still—all of those letters with their messages of sympathy and affection. But the one that I remember best came from an old friend, Albert Duclos, who was a Shakespearian actor. He simply wrote to me what Shakespeare wrote in the sixteenth century, in the scene from *Macbeth* where Malcolm says to the stunned and grieving MacDuff—and

Albert Duclos wrote to me only this—“Give sorrow words.”

My book *The Giver* is about people who are unable to do that. They have relinquished words. Oh, they have language, of course; they even insist on what they call “precision of language” so that there are never misinterpretations or misunderstandings. But they have lost the lyricism and subtlety of language. Poetry is gone, and stories are forgotten. The library has closed down. Literature is lost.

Give sorrow words? Oops. Can’t. Don’t remember how.

Two books later, in *Messenger*, the third book of what has become known as *The Giver* trilogy, words have returned. The disillusioned boy, Jonas, is there, older, changed, in the new place; and books are there, too, and words from the past. They mourn the loss of the boy Matty with the words—written a hundred years ago—of A. E. Housman. Give sorrow words? Now they can:

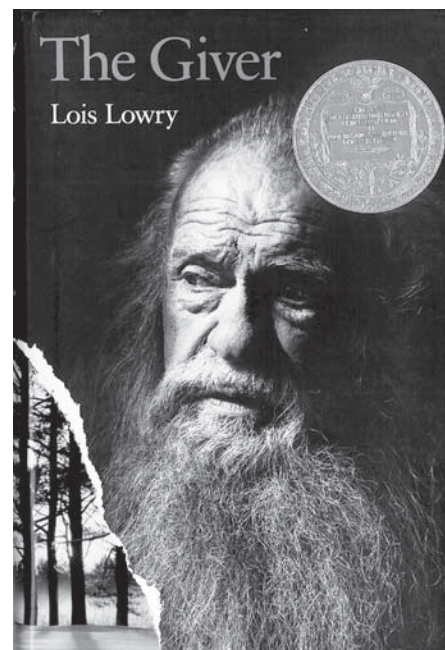
Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

* * * * *

In December, I spoke at a large conference, and afterward someone called my attention to the blog of someone who had been there that day. The person had enjoyed my presentation—I suppose that if she hadn’t, no one would have directed me to the blog post. But in referring to me, she had described me as “the venerable author Lois Lowry.”

I gulped. I took it to mean old. Ancient. Well, why not? Fair enough. I’ve already told you that I’m seventy-four. But still! I brooded about it a bit. Then I looked it up and found, to my relief, that it can also mean respected and wise. That felt a little better than plain old *old*.

But I must have become a bit obsessive because I found myself thinking, sud-



denly, about the Venerable Bede. Where did that memory come from? No idea. Who here—show of hands?—knows exactly who the Venerable Bede was, even if you recognize the name?

I Googled him. Just for the record, he was a seventh-century Northumbrian monk, a scholar and writer of English Ecclesiastical History. His works—no longer under copyright (so you don’t have to ask permission if you want to have some lines tattooed on your shoulder) are available online, in Latin, of course. (Perhaps Myron Krupnik would translate for you after he finishes singing the tenor aria in the Verdi Requiem).

But here is one lovely bit from my research into the Venerable Bede which I am so happy to have come across: he wrote that our life is such a little thing, it’s like a bird in the darkness suddenly finding a way into a banquet hall and flying through it and looking down at all the banqueters and then flying out the other side.

Do you love that image as much as I do? I picture the bird looking down at the feast that our lives consist of . . . maybe swooping low here and there to taste something, to savor it, before he glides on. Maybe even spitting something out, because we all know that at any potluck (and that’s what our lives are, a collection of things that others bring to it) there is always going to be the occasional tuna

casserole, and Aunt Grace always brings her molded Jello salad with marshmallows in it.

And what if the banquet consists of literature, as mine would, as mine has? There have always been less than memorable books. There will always be celebrity biographies and novelized versions of animated movies and how-to books to help you improve your love life or your golf game. But now and then, here and there, you would find bits and pieces of pure gold.

That's what I've found. And I've tried to give them back, to pass them on. I've spoken tonight of Housman and Hopkins, Shakespeare and Steinbeck. But there are so many others. And they are pure, pure gold.

* * * * *

Twenty-eight years ago this past January, I received a letter from a father who enclosed a photograph of his seventeen-year-old son. The boy's name, I recall, was David. Typical high school senior, wearing a jacket with the name of a sports team on it. Hair in his eyes. Big grin. He looked like a nice kid.

His father's letter continued with a description of his much-loved only son but concluded with an account of the boy's sudden death during an asthma attack the previous September.

Why had he written to me? He told me that their surviving child was a fourteen-year-old daughter. (I remember that her name was Bronwyn—isn't it amazing, to remember such a detail after twenty-eight years?)

He told me that she had read and loved my book *A Summer to Die*, my first book, the one about my sister. A month before, the whole family still reeling from David's death, Bronwyn had gone to that book, had copied one paragraph in fine calligraphy, framed it and given it to her parents for Christmas.

He told me that the words she copied were these:

Time goes on, and your life is still there, and you have to live it. After a while you remember the good things more often than the bad. Then, gradually, the empty silent parts of you fill up with sounds of talking and laughter again, and the jagged edges of sadness are softened by memories.

Much more recently—probably two years ago—I spoke at an evening event at a library someplace. There were a lot of kids, and whole families, and I showed pictures of my own childhood and talked about the origins of various books. Then I signed books, and the evening was ending, when a gray-haired man came up to me.

"I wanted to tell you," he said, "that we do remember the good things more often than the bad.

"I'm David's father. I don't know if you'll remember me."

I did remember him, then. We talked briefly, and hugged and said goodbye. But what has stayed with me was the realization that the words that had spoken to him, that he had carried with him for almost three decades, were words

of mine—that in the same way writers from the past had whispered to me, I had whispered to this man's daughter, and through her to him, and they had found comfort in those words.

* * * * *

The poet Howard Nemerov, in a poem called "The Makers," speaks of the earliest poets:

They were the ones that in whatever tongue

Worded the world, that were the first to say

Star, water, stone, that said the visible

And made it bring invisibles to view

I know that for some reason, this evening, I seem to have focused on sorrow. Perhaps those times, when Goldengrove is unleaving and winter is coming and we are mourning for ourselves—and, as Will Banks told Meg in the book, we all do—those are the times when we most need the burnished and golden words that have brought invisibles to view through generations.

But I'm grateful as well for those countless generations—centuries—of poets and writers who have also given words to courage, to joy, to humor, to integrity, to memory—and who have nourished me and compelled me to add my own words, and to give them, then, to children.

Thank you. ☺

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 4

I will communicate value within ALSC. *Children and Libraries* and our newsletter, *ALSCconnect*, will include my columns. You also may see my efforts to communicate our value in the wider world, as every ALSC president fields many media requests. If you're at conference, sit in on a board meeting to see

how our board makes decisions about value and how to communicate it.

I hope that I will also be hearing from you. ALSC is your association, and your participation is essential.

In future months, through our various

media channels, we will continue the conversation on communicating value. Many thanks for the opportunity to serve as your president during the coming year. I look forward to communicating the deep value of ALSC and our work to you and with you as we make our positive difference in the world! ☺

Music, Movement, and Early Literacy

A Best Practices Primer for “Gotta Move!”

HAYLEY ELECE MCEWING

Communication is more than words. It is music. It is movement.

One summer, when I was an undergraduate student, I volunteered for a few days at a summer camp for kids with special needs ranging from mobility issues to cognitive challenges. One nine-year-old boy did not speak, but he had a favorite song that he would “beep.” (“Beep” is the musical vocalization he used in place of words.) If you “beeped” the first melodic phrase to him, he would “beep” the second phrase back to you. For him, communication was music.

Recently, my niece turned one. She’s still in the baby babbling stage, but when we say “dance!” that little being lights up. She places her hands palm to palm and shakes from side to side. For her, communication is movement.

Throughout the world there are music and movement traditions that bring people together, from songs for holidays and special occasions to dances and sports ingrained in culture. Not only can music and movement provide common ground and shared experiences for various peoples of various ages, they also involve the multiple intelligences—and not just the musical and kinesthetic ones. Connecting to and working with others through music involves our emotional (intrapersonal) and social (interpersonal) intelligences. Physical activity benefits our mood and ability to learn as our body produces “feel-good” chemicals, such as endorphins and serotonin. From an early literacy perspective, music and singing are crucial in developing phonological and phonemic awareness, and moving to or playing with rhymes and stories aids vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills.

In addition to these positives, our library staff has noticed that the current slogan for our Gotta Move! program (“An active



Sound suitcase for the letter Bb.

storytime for the young and the restless!”) tends to attract caregivers who feel that the child in his/her care would normally be unwelcome, disruptive, or too active at other story based programs. For these reasons, the Gotta Move! (Music, Movement, and Early Literacy) program at my library has been well received by current as well as new patrons.

The Gotta Move! Program

The Gotta Move! program has its roots in the Mother Goose on the Loose (www.mgol.net) model established by librarian Betsy Diamant-Cohen.¹ It has been adapted to connect with the six early literacy skills presented in detail by ALA’s first Every Child Ready to Read initiative in 2004 and practically applied to a library setting, as described in Saroj Ghoting’s *Early Literacy Storytimes*.² Librarians can also market and describe the program with the terminology of the second Every Child Ready to Read initiative (www.everychildreadytoread.org), released in 2011, by mentioning the importance of talking, singing, playing, reading, and writing.

The six components in the Gotta Move! program are Letter-cise, Nursery/Action Rhymes, Name Game, Participation/Movement Story, Sitting Story, and Circle Time. These components can be arranged according to the flow of the presenter. Due to an increase in attendance, my recent practice follows this order:



Hayley Elece McEwing is a Children’s Librarian at the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County in Ohio. She began her blog (<http://librarieslearnlead.blogspot.com>) after becoming a 2009 ALA Emerging Leader.

Picking Props

Here are some ideas for props that could be incorporated into your library's music, movement, and literacy programming.

- Feathers, small and large (\$9.95 peacock or pheasant from Oriental Trading)
- Hula hoops for crawling through or laying on the ground for "stepping" stones
- Letter bean bags (\$37.95 from Lakeshore Learning)
- Parachute (\$19.95–\$99.95 from Lakeshore Learning)
- Rhythm band instruments such as shakers, bells, sticks
- Scarves/streamers (I use crepe paper streamers because they are already a library supply item, and the kids can take them home.)
- Soft balls (Washable Sensory Balls, \$29.95 from Lakeshore Learning)
- "Stepping stones" such as self-laminated shapes or pieces of cloth
- Sticky board (\$60 by Post-It)

Name Game (as children arrive and before the program officially starts), Sitting Story, Letter-cise, Nursery/Action Rhymes, Participation/Movement Story, and Circle Time.

After an introduction, welcome, and a standard, opening song, I begin the program with **Letter-cise**, which relies heavily on talking and can highlight the letter knowledge, vocabulary, and print awareness early literacy skills. To begin the conversation, sometimes we use the Sound Suitcase, an idea I derived from Jane Belk Moncure's Sound Box Library series.

The Sound Suitcase is a plastic tote box in which I place labeled toys (occasionally pictures that I will use later in the program) that all start with the same letter and letter sound. One by one, we take out an object and name it, checking the word on the label to see if we are right. If we don't know the name of the object, we check the label to see what letter it starts with. Then we warm up our muscles by making large movements to the following rhyme, inspired by Jean Feldman and Holly Karapetkova: "Let's shout the name of this letter ___ / which makes the sound ___ / and starts the word ____."³ For the first phrase, raise hands in the air, stretch, and stand on tiptoes. For the second phrase, put hands on the waist. For the third phrase, touch the ground with legs straight or bent, and name a word that starts with that letter and sound. Remind the kids of the objects from the Sound Suitcase.

Depending on the age of most of the audience, the presenter could also attempt the fine motor skill of creating American Sign Language letters or could display an alphabet poster and invite oral and physical participation with this rhyme: "(Sing to: "London Bridge") Find a letter that you know, that you know, that you know. Find a letter that you know, and tell (or show) us what it is." With an audience of mostly two year olds, the presenter may change the Letter-cise warm up to just acting out words that start with the same letter. For example, for the letter "B," have the kids bow, bounce, and blow. I've also used the letter-writing rhymes from *I Love Letters!* by Jean Feldman and Holly Karapetkova to motivate the kids to trace letters in the air. However, it's a better one-on-one activity for parents to try at home and is a perfect tie-in to Every Child Ready to Read, 2nd edition's writing component.

Next are the **Nursery/Action Rhymes**, which allow one to mention phonological awareness, print awareness, and vocabulary tips. I'll do at least two rhymes, usually a nursery rhyme and an action rhyme or song. If I find a version on a music CD, I sometimes use that or use it in addition to presenting it by myself.

If I highlight print awareness, I show a poster or projection of the text, point to the words, and involve the children with the written text. For example, when I used "The North Wind Doth Blow," I got the rebus version from EnchantedLearning.com. I handed out one rebus picture/word to each child, and they came up and placed it on the Post-It sticky board when we read their word.

The third component of Gotta Move! is the **Name Game**, used to highlight phonological awareness or print awareness. (The Name Game is a staple in this program because we seem to draw new and different patrons every week!) There are several activities I've gathered from various electronic discussion lists. I've used "Heckedy, peckedy, bumblebee, won't you say your name for me?" while we clapped the syllables. I've also used a rhyme to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Using the name "Leah" as an example, the song goes: "Roll, roll, roll the ball, happy as can be / Leah, Leah, Leah, Leah roll it back to me." If the child performs an action other than rolling, I bring it to the kids' attention: "Leah didn't roll the ball. What did she do?" The ball is one I use in baby programs, so it is not the safety hazard it may seem; I see it as another opportunity to model playing and talking with the children. I've also had the kids use rhythm instruments such as shakers, rhythm sticks, and a tambourine to tap out the syllables of their names.

You could also do a flannel or magnetic board name-game activity. For example, at the beginning of the program, have the children write their name (print awareness and writing!) on cutout clip art pictures that relate to the theme or letter of the day, and have them place their name/picture on the sticky board during a rhyme such as the following. For example, the theme for the program might be bears: "We're looking for some bears for our cave / Put some low and some high / Let's add red bears, give it a try / Who has red bears for our cave?"⁴ (See the bibliography on page 33.) Greet the children by name as they participate, and comment on who has what color bear: "Ava and Lorenzo have red bears!" Continue calling for different colored bears to be added to the board.

The fourth and fifth components involve active stories—one using large motor skills (Participation/Movement Story), and one using fine motor skills (Sitting Story).

The **Participation/Movement Story** is the perfect time to mention narrative skills and print awareness or the concept of play acting in the learning process. Try using a story from the accompanying Movement-Based Picturebooks list (see the bibliography on page 32), create a movement-based oral story, or act out a story-song like “This Old Man” or “The Bear Went Over the Mountain.” Present the book version, too, if it’s available. (See examples on the “Singable Picturebooks” list at www.worldcat.org/profiles/MissHayleyMac/lists/1903497.)

The **Sitting Story** is the component I link to print motivation and the importance of spending time reading together. Even though this is the “Sitting Story,” I tend to use books or oral stories that involve fine motor skills or any quiet movements that the kids can do while sitting.

Gotta Move! ends with a **Circle Time** activity and a closing song. These components cover phonological awareness through the use of singing, music, and rhymes. They also cover vocabulary and comprehension through following directions and acting out what words mean. This is the perfect time to try a parachute activity (if your little ones aren’t too little) and to try circle activities found in early childhood education resources. For starters, try a song like “The Farmer in the Dell” or “Here We Go ’Round the Mulberry Bush” that suggest a circle dance.

Currently, the weekly Gotta Move! program (marketed for ages two through five years) is advertised on our website (<http://www.libraryvisit.org/Programs.aspx>) and in our monthly newsletter. The large age range is challenging for the presenter but convenient for families with children of different ages. In fact, this is one reason that we started with Mother Goose on the Loose and developed the Gotta Move! program. At that time, we found that our advertised program “Fun for 4s and 5s” was not well attended, and when it was, there were more younger, accompanying siblings in the audience than the four and five year olds!

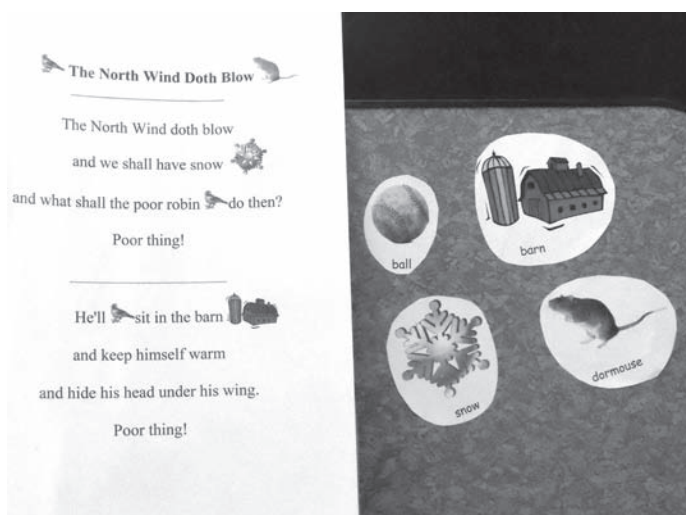
We are now facing different trends with all programs and audiences. Caregivers are asking for a traditional, preschool-age storytime more than once a month. Also, the number of children attending Gotta Move! coupled with the large developmental span (which ends up being infant to six year olds) sometimes results in a more unruly educational environment than is desirable. Scheduling and staffing issues along with these changes in community needs are leading us to consider program changes for fall, probably adding more preschool storytimes, discontinuing the Gotta Move! program, and transferring the success of the ideas of music, movement, and parental involvement into more and modified family, evening programs.

Overall, my experience with creating and presenting a program based on music, movement, and early literacy has raised my awareness of meeting different individual’s needs, enhanced my comfort level with tying and voicing early literacy into library programs, and challenged me to provide activities that get the whole family singing, talking, playing, reading, and writing together. ☺

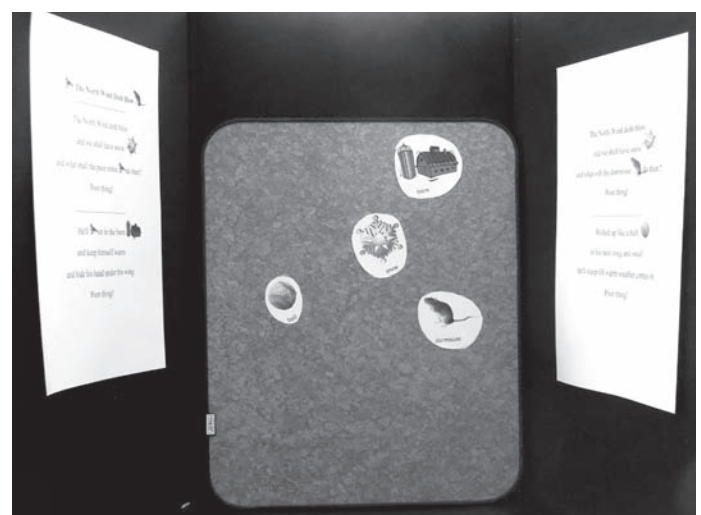
To access Gotta Move! program outlines and handouts, visit the author’s blog at <http://librarieslearnlead.blogspot.com>. Under “Youth Services Programs and Resources” in the upper right, click on “Music, Movement, and Early Literacy Programs” to access the Google Docs files.

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Print awareness highlighted through rebus rhyme.



Tri-fold flannel board with sticky board propped in center.

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Through Their Eyes

The Development of Self-Concept in Young African American Children through Board Books

SANDRA HUGHES-HASSELL, ELIZABETH KOEHLER, AND ERNIE J. COX

The first books that children “read” are board books. With the support of parents, caregivers, daycare providers, and preschool teachers, children are encouraged to engage with board books by identifying objects, people, and actions, talking about the emotions being expressed in the text and pictures, and noticing how they themselves are similar to or different from the people depicted in the books.

The effects of interactions with board books on an infant’s cognitive development are well known: they aid children in learning to recognize familiar objects and in developing basic concepts related to people, animals, possessions, familiar events, and daily routines.¹ Board books also contribute to the expansion of infants’ vocabularies and aid them in understanding language. Rhymes, rhythms, textured pages, and physical actions (like hand clapping) are popular features of board books that build sensory awareness in toddlers.²

In addition to these recognized contributions, board books play another important role in the lives of infants and toddlers: they facilitate the development of an appreciation of self.³

Self-Concept Development in African American Children

Young children are not oblivious to the appearances of the people depicted in the books they read, nor are they unaware of racial differences. Research indicates that babies as young as four weeks old recognize and enjoy looking at human faces in picture books.⁴ Additionally, infants begin to notice skin color differences as early as six months and often begin to ask questions about these differences by the age of two.⁵

By the time they are three years old, children start to categorize people by other noticed physical differences, including hair texture and shape of facial features, and they develop attitudes about people of different races and ethnic groups.⁶

Exposure to multicultural children’s literature is critical for African American children in their early development; it reinforces their cultural identity.⁷ Positive cultural images and messages about race encourage positive racial identity development and diminish the potential impact of stereotypes on infants and toddlers.⁸ This is especially significant as young

Sandra Hughes-Hassell (right) is Associate Professor in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include delivery of information services to children and young adults, multicultural literature, information needs of underserved youth, and the role of school library media specialists in education reform. **Elizabeth Koehler** (center) is a Middle School Librarian at the Darlington School in Rome, Georgia. She is a 2011 graduate of the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. **Ernie J. Cox** (far right) is Teacher-Librarian at Prairie Creek Intermediate School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and a member of the ALSC Board of Directors.



children face two of the major tasks of early childhood: the development of self-concept and self-esteem.

Self-concept refers to “the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and ideas people have about themselves.”⁹ Children begin to develop self-concept during the toddler years. By the time they are twenty-one to twenty-four months old, toddlers can recognize themselves in a mirror, and they begin to use words like “me,” “I,” and “mine” to assert their individuality. They also can describe themselves in terms of concrete observable characteristics related to their abilities, activities, and possessions. For example, “I go park,” “I jump,” and “I have dump truck.”¹⁰

Self-esteem is another important perception directly related to self-concept. It can be defined as “an overall evaluation of one’s value or worth as a person.”¹¹ Toddlers demonstrate self-esteem through their actions and behaviors.¹² Those with high self-esteem appear to be confident, curious, and independent, and they are able to adjust to changes and transitions, tolerate frustration, and handle conflict.¹³

“Race is not irrelevant, and the illustrations in books must reflect realistic features of African Americans, portray them in believable situations, and be culturally accurate.”

Parents and society send messages that contribute to the developing self-concept and self-esteem of toddlers. Unfortunately, the impact of racism begins early. African American children often struggle to develop positive feelings of competency and worth when faced with racial and ethnic prejudices.¹⁴ As Beverly Tatum, president of Spelman College notes, young African American children who are exposed to misinformation about themselves or about people who are different from themselves internalize these images and form assumptions that may go unchallenged for years.¹⁵

Psychologist William Cross cultivated a theory of racial identity development that includes five stages.¹⁶ The first stage, which Cross refers to as the pre-encounter stage, is pertinent to this article. In this stage, African American children take on many of the beliefs and values of the dominant white culture, including the belief that it is better to be white.¹⁷

The messages that African American children receive from society include stereotypes, omissions, and distortions, along with an image of white superiority, that ultimately socialize them to value the role models, lifestyles, and images of beauty of white culture more than those of their own cultural group.¹⁸ For African American children to experience growth and develop self-esteem and positive self-concept, this message of white superiority must be challenged.¹⁹

The Role of Literature in Counteracting Stereotyping

One strategy for working against damaging prejudices and stereotypes is to develop environments that reflect diversity. At home, at their daycare centers, in their preschools, and in their public libraries, African American children should receive messages that nurture their developing sense of self-concept and self-esteem.²⁰ Multicultural board books are an important element of these diverse environments.

Although fluctuations in the publication of multicultural literature have been seen in recent decades in the United States, the number of books featuring nonwhite characters has never accurately reflected U.S. demographics.²¹ The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that, of the more than 72 million children in the United States, almost 15 percent are African American, yet in 2009 only 5 percent of the books received by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) had significant African or African American content.²²

As Gail Pettiford Willett, former program coordinator for the Cambridge Public Library, writes, “When children cannot identify with a book or see their lives celebrated through stories, it may have a negative impact on their self-image. The message they get is that their lives and their stories are not important.”²³

Finding board books that feature African American infants, toddlers, and families is especially challenging.²⁴ Jonella Mongo, special lecturer in the Department of Reading and Language Arts at Oakland University, found that only forty-eight board books featuring African Americans were published from 1990 through 2002, with the bulk of these being published between 1994 and 1999.²⁵ By 2002, she could find only one title.

In our 2010 study, which focused on the representation of people of color in board books, we found similar results.²⁶ Between 2003 and 2008, 218 board books that contained people were published and reviewed in mainstream journals such as *School Library Journal* and *Hornbook*. Only 11 (5 percent) of these books focused on African American children or families, and only 50 (23 percent) of the board books contained children and adults from multiple racial and ethnic groups. Of those 50 titles, 32 did include some African American characters, yet the number of African American characters per title was still lower than the number of white characters.

The number of African American characters in board books is not the only issue to be addressed. Representation of ethnicity and culture is as important as inclusion. While the quality of multicultural literature has improved over time, inaccuracies and stereotypes can still be found in children’s books.²⁷

As James Banks, director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, argues, books that provide inaccurate or inauthentic depictions of African Americans confuse children, reinforce stereotypes, and can be the source of harmful misconceptions for children of all races.²⁸

One board book that illustrates this point is *Country Babies Wear Plaid*, in which the illustrator uses the same slender tall

figure to depict mothers of different races.²⁹ These mothers are all taking part in the same activities in the same settings—nothing is different but the hue of their skin. As Mongo points out, “Just painting the faces of characters brown in a book is not sufficient.”³⁰

Race is not irrelevant, and the illustrations in books must reflect realistic features of African Americans, portray them in believable situations, and be culturally accurate.³¹

Another related issue is finding books that reflect the diversity within African American families. It is difficult to find books depicting African American children with very dark or very light skin.³² It is even more difficult to find images of biracial or multiracial children, despite the fact that demographers estimate that the number of biracial children will only continue to increase. To think of multicultural representation as a single kind of board book perpetuates an incomplete understanding of reality and denies children of color an important resource for developing a positive sense of self.

A Role for Public Librarians

The most obvious role librarians can play is to develop an authentic collection of board books that will engage and promote the self-esteem of African American children. To assist with this task, we have developed an annotated bibliography of board books about African American babies and toddlers (see “Recommended Board Books” on page 40). Either the author or illustrator of each book is African American, and all of the books were, as of late 2010, still in print.

Including board books that feature African American infants and toddlers, however, is not enough. Because there are so few of these board books, they will undoubtedly make up only a small portion of the board books in the collection. Library visitors may not find them on their own, or they may not even know to look for them at the library. Librarians need to promote these books to parents, caregivers, and daycare providers by displaying them in the library, recommending them to visitors, highlighting them in newsletters, and featuring them on the library’s website.

If the library generally utilizes any special strategies to promote new or timely parts of the collection, those same strategies can be applied to the promotion of board books that feature African American children. Does the library or the children’s section use a special table or section to feature books? A flyer or a bulletin board to accompany a display of these board books may serve to educate library visitors about the statistics and issues discussed in this article. If the children’s department celebrates a monthly or seasonal theme, there may be an opportunity to

promote multicultural literature and raise awareness of multicultural board books. If the library conducts workshops for local daycare providers or provides book mobile services to local daycare centers, which many do, librarians need to make sure to feature these books.

“To think of multicultural representation as a single kind of board book perpetuates an incomplete understanding of reality and denies children of color an important resource for developing a positive sense of self.”

Librarians also need to incorporate board books that feature African American infants and toddlers into storytimes. Include dolls, toys, puzzles, and wall decorations in the story area that reflect diverse images. These actions will serve not only African American children, but children of all cultures and ethnicities who may not regularly be exposed to diverse or multicultural literature. Librarians committed to promoting authentic multicultural literature might also consider inviting African American authors or illustrators to

the library for readings or storytime, or they might feature African American and other multicultural authors in library displays or on the library’s website.

Finally, the fact that there are so few board books available that feature African American infants, toddlers, and families should act as a call to action for librarians. Public library usage data shows that African Americans are just as likely as whites to use public libraries.³³ Perhaps the time has come for librarians to challenge the large, mainstream publishers to provide board books for African American children. As Kathleen T. Horning, director of the CCBC at the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her colleagues note, there are many editors who understand the need for more literature that represents our diverse society, but “their passion for publishing multicultural literature cannot always carry the day in meetings with bottom-line number crunchers wanting to know whether such books will sell.”³⁴

Contact publishers and express your need for these materials. Create a fact sheet that presents the research that shows the need for these books, with an emphasis on the potential impact they can have on the developing self-concept of African American children. When you visit the vendor exhibits at national and state conferences, talk to the publisher representatives and distribute your fact sheet.

Developing a healthy identity and positive self-concept are major tasks in early childhood. Through their interactions with the world, young children begin to figure out how they are the same and different from other people, and how they feel about these differences. In this article we have argued that public libraries can play a role in helping to lay a positive foundation for African American children by promoting board books that reflect their lives, thus counteracting the prevailing biased messages of the wider society. The same is true for children who belong to other racial and ethnic communities. ☺

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Recommended Board Books Featuring African American Infants and Toddlers

Asim, Jabari. *Girl of Mine*. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Little, Brown, 2010. 20p.

As Daddy cradles his baby girl, she is suddenly whisked away on a fantastical adventure. The text is inspired by "Rock-a-Bye Baby."



———. ***Whose Knees Are These*. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Little, Brown, 2006. 20p.**

This book takes a loving look at knees from the vantage point of a mother's lap.

———. ***Whose Toes Are Those*. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Little, Brown, 2006. 11p.**

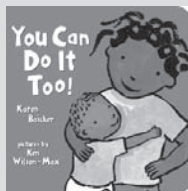
Children are invited to explore their toes by playing "This Little Piggy."

Baicker, Karen. *I Can Do It Too!* Illus. by Ken Wilson-Max. Chronicle, 2010. 18p.

Anyone can pour juice, bake a cake, and kiss away hurts, right? But maybe it's not so easy when one is very small.

———. ***You Can Do It Too!* Illus. by Ken Wilson-Max. Chronicle, 2010. 18p.**

From banging a spoon on the back of a pan for music to march by to spitting straight into the sink when it is tooth-brushing time, the big sister is very busy—so busy that it takes a while for her to realize that her little brother can do something she cannot.



DuBurke, Randy, *Little Mister*. Illus. by the author. Chronicle, 2006. 22p.

From dawn to dusk (and then some!), a toddler's life

is busy, busy, busy—helping Mommy in the kitchen, playing the time-to-get-dressed chase, investigating a mysterious box. The adventures are endless! This is a celebration of a toddler's daily life.



Hudson, Cheryl Willis. *Animal Sounds for Baby*. Illus. by George Ford. Scholastic, 1997. 10p.

Visiting a petting zoo, an African American baby girl is introduced to the sounds made by several familiar animals, including a cow, horse, cat, duck, lamb, and pig.

Hudson, Cheryl Willis. *Good Morning, Baby*. Illus. by George Ford. Scholastic, 1997. 10p.

Waking up on a bright and sunny morning, an exuberant African American baby girl washes up, gets dressed, eats her breakfast, and runs out to play.

———. ***Good Night, Baby*. Illus. by George Ford. Scholastic, 1997. 10p.**

As a toddler plays with her favorite toys, including a teddy bear, toy trucks and cars, rubber ducks, and building blocks, children are introduced to the numbers one through ten.

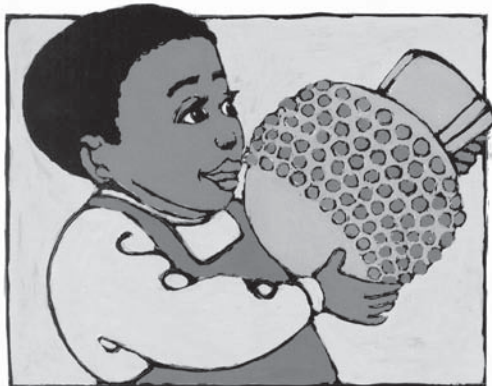
———. ***Let's Count, Baby*. Illus. by George Ford. Scholastic, 1997. 10p.**

Baby can count different objects that are all around her, including red trucks, yellow ducks, singing birds, and funny socks. Can you count to ten like Baby can?

Johnson, Angela. *Joshua by the Sea*. Illus. by Rhonda Mitchell. Orchard, 1994. 12p.

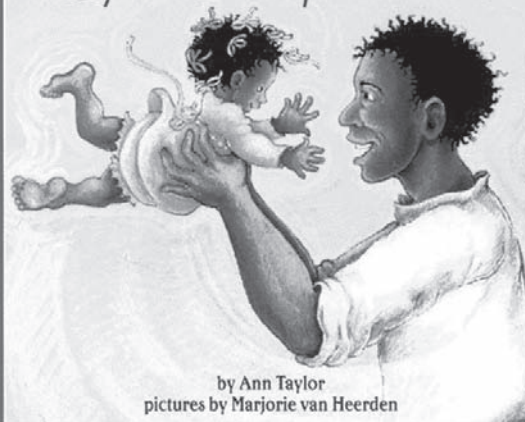
Joshua, a young African American boy, goes to the shore with his family.

Shake Shake Shake



Andrea and Brian Pinkney

Baby Dance



**by Ann Taylor
pictures by Marjorie van Heerden**

———. *Rain Feet*. Illus. by Rhonda Mitchell. Orchard, 1994. 12p.

Joshua splashes through puddles in a yellow slicker and boots.

Lee, Spike and Tonya Lewis Lee. *Please, Baby, Please*. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. Simon & Schuster, 2007. 32p.

The Academy-Award nominated filmmaker and his wife present a behind-the-scenes look at the chills, spills, and unequivocal thrills of bringing up baby.



Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *I Smell Honey*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Harcourt, 1997. 8p.

Help boil the greens, flip the fish, and slice the pie for a mouth-watering family meal.

———. *Pretty Brown Face*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Harcourt, 1997. 8p.

A toddler discovers the unique features that make his face so special. A Mylar mirror encourages children to explore their faces.

———. *Shake Shake Shake*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Harcourt, 1997. 8p.

———. *Watch Me Dance*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Harcourt, 1997. 8p.

Explore the joys of rhythm and movement. These books celebrate the closeness of a loving African American family.

Pinkney, Sandra L. *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children*. Photos by Myles C. Pinkney. Scholastic, 2006. 24p.

"I am Black / I am Unique / I am the creamy white frost in vanilla ice cream / and the milky smooth brown in a chocolate bar." This book uses simple poetic language and is a remarkable book of affirmation for African American children.

Tarpley, Natasha Anastasia. *I Love My Hair!* Illus. by E. B. Lewis. Little, Brown, 2003. 11p.

This book encourages young black children to not only feel good about their special hair, but to also feel proud of their heritage.



Taylor, Ann. *Baby Dance*. Illus. by Marjorie van Heerden. HarperFestival, 1998. 16p.

While engaged in a high-spirited dance around the room, a father sings to his baby daughter.

Nurture Boundless Imaginations...

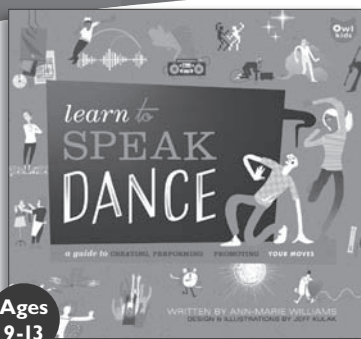


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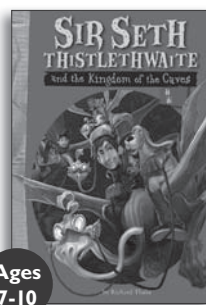
~ Kirkus Reviews



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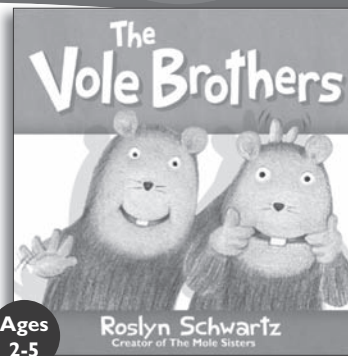
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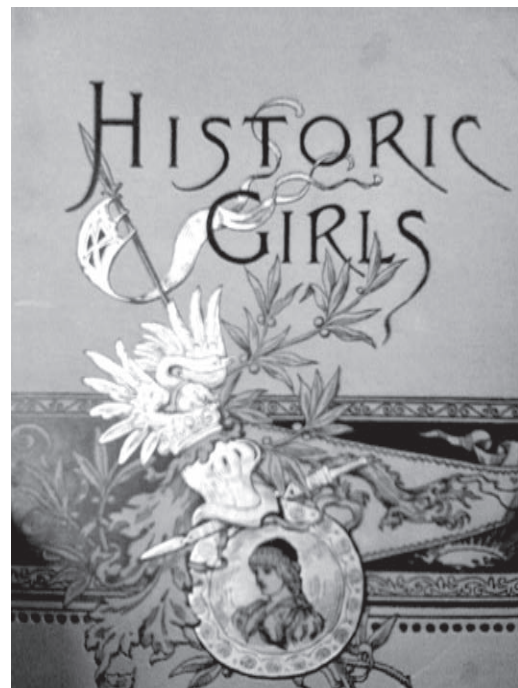
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Searching for She-roes

A Study of Biographies of Historic Women Written for Children

CHRISTINA H. DORR



You'll never believe the women I've met:

- *Nellie Bly as she experienced the torture of backbreaking factory work to be able to write her newspaper story with honesty;*
- *Amelia Earhart encountering the failure of her altimeter while snow and ice coated her windshield as she attempted to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic;*
- *Marie Antoinette as she faced meeting the loveless face of the French Dauphin to whom she was betrothed;*
- *Althea Gibson as she faced her opponents as the first African American woman ever to compete at Wimbledon;*
- *Elizabeth Blackwell as she endured the discrimination of men as she searched for a college to train her as a doctor;*
- *Eleanor Roosevelt as she stood to address the United Nations, representing the United States after her husband's death; and*
- *Sacagawea as she approached Native Americans to help bring peace between them and Lewis and Clark.*

It seems as though adults have always written and published biographies for children, stories like those mentioned above, in the hope that the lives of those written about will in some way inspire the child reader to make the most of her own life. The difference, I've found, between successful and unsuccessful biographies, may well lie in the styles in which they are written, illustrated, and packaged—even more than the choice of biographee or the content the author chooses to share. A brief look back at some of the priceless biographies housed in the Baldwin Collection at the Special Collections Library at the George A. Smathers Library at the University of Florida in Gainesville—with a particular interest in books about Amelia Earhart—will show you what I mean.

Being a woman—a poor child of the 1960s who searched relentlessly in biographies of women to inspire myself—I focused on what historically girls have been offered over the decades, indeed centuries, as models. I remember my elementary school library biography section clearly: three shelves of thick tomes and a series titled “The Childhood of Famous Americans.”

As a second grader perusing these shelves, I overlooked the daunting, thick books and began to work my way through the Childhood of Famous Americans series. I can't remember which individual titles spoke to me the most clearly, nor how



Christina H. Dorr, PhD, has been an Elementary Media Specialist for twenty-one years, currently with Hilliard (Ohio) City School District. She also is an Adjunct Instructor in Library Science and Education with Kent State University and Ashland University. She served on ALSC's Notable Children's Book Award Committee for 2006 and 2007, and was named to the Norman A. Sugarman Committee, which honors the best biographies written for children.

many I actually read before outgrowing them and moving on to more difficult titles, but I can remember them having a deep impact on my ideas of possibilities for my life.

As a child growing up in a very poor farm family, where food was abundant but opportunities seemed scarce, the picture these books created of what I could become was powerful. Because of my background, what girls have been offered throughout the decades and centuries as models is important to me.

The oldest biography I discovered, a collective biography published in 1795, titled *Plutarch's Lives Abridged; in which The Historical Parts are Carefully Preserved, and the Comparisons of the Respective Lives Accurately Delineated, Calculated for the Instruction of Youth*, does not contain any women as subjects. However, wives, mistresses, and daughters of the biographees are mentioned—sometimes even by name.

The first few titles deeming it fit to include women were small chapbooks that completely sanitized their subjects and unabashedly promoted their pious Protestant ways. The first of such books was *Biography for Girls; or, Moral and Instructive Examples for the Female Sex*, published in London in 1814. By the 1820s, a few authors began to include lives of famous women, but with the same purpose, and told in the same overly dramatic, sanitized fashion.

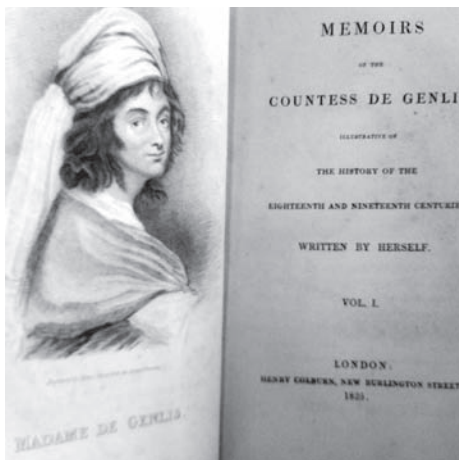
Some authors, even females, degraded the accomplishments of women. One example is Mrs. Jameson's *Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns*, one of the first books to focus on famous women. In the preface, she states the purpose of the book:

The intention of this work is to present in a small compass, and at one view, an idea of the influence with a female government has had *generally* on men and nations, and of the influence which the possession of power has had *individually* on the female character.¹

Her conclusion is this:

On the whole, it seems indisputable that the experiments hitherto made in the way of female government have been signally unfortunate; and that women called to empire have been, in most cases, conspicuously unhappy or criminal. So that, were we to judge by the past, it might be decided at once, that the power which belongs to us, as a sex, is not properly or naturally that of the scepter or the sword.²

A notable exception to this trend is a set of eight volumes that encompasses the autobiography of the Countess de Genlis, published in 1825, and titled *Memoirs of the Countess de Genlis, Illustrative of the History of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Her full name was Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest de



St.-Aubin. She was a French writer of books for children and adults, musician, educator, and all-around flamboyant character who escaped to England during the French Revolution. It was totally refreshing to find a female who wasn't the perfect Protestant and example of her gender—probably because she was writing it herself. She purports to counter what others have written about her, those “scandalous anecdotes.”³ What is most intriguing, however, is the voice:

I was born so small and so weakly that they would not venture to put me in swaddling clothes, and a few moments after my birth, I was on the point of losing my life. I had been placed in a down pillow, of which, to keep me warm, the two sides were folded over me, and fastened with a pin; and thus wrapped up, I was laid upon an arm-chair in the room. The judge of the district, who was almost blind, came to pay his visit of compliment to my father; and as, in his country fashion, he separated the huge flaps of his coat to sit down, someone saw that he was going to place himself in the arm-chair where I was; luckily he was prevented from sitting down, and I escaped being crushed to death.⁴

Though most likely a set written for adults, children of the time most likely enjoyed the humor and storyteller's style as well.

By the mid-1800s, the style of writing was becoming less preachy, and somewhat more engaging. The content became more realistic, and the subjects were more often famous women than commoners.

Fewer collections, and more individual biographies, appeared; quotations were sometimes used, but still very few books listed references consulted. One biographer, Jacob Abbott, in writing *The Life of Elizabeth, Queen of England* (1850), states in the beginning pages that he was “to confine himself very strictly . . . to historic truth . . . with no intentional embellishment.”⁵

Furthermore, in perusing the contents page, I found a chapter entitled “Elizabeth's Lovers,” but upon reading the chapter found that although she never married, “it was not for want of lovers, or rather of admirers and suitors, that Elizabeth lived single all her days.”⁶ Her character isn't completely sanitized; there is talk of plots and relationships, though nothing openly.

I happened upon another book published around the same time: the first biography of an African American. *Aunt Sally; or, The Cross the Way of Freedom. A Narrative of the Slave-life and Purchase of the Mother of Rev. Isaac Williams, of Detroit, Michigan* was published in 1866 with no author's name listed. The story is interesting in that it is the first slave narrative I encountered at the Baldwin collection. However, like so many others, it was written to prove the worthiness of Protestantism. Its style is heavy-handed and preachy, but the story is told in

a more engaging manner than those early in the century. The book includes some drawings, poetry, and hymns.

The second autobiography I encountered of a girl was published in 1878 by Margaret S. Jeune and titled *My School-Days in Paris*. Though France was predominantly a Catholic country, Protestantism was first mentioned on the second page and was brought up frequently thereafter.

Like de Genlis' book, it seems to have been written in later years as an adult recalling her childhood. Unlike de Genlis' autobiography, however, Jeune chose the writing style of the early 1800s: lengthy sentences and a stuffier manner. It is, however, the first book I have found with captions to explain action in the drawings.

The first half of the twentieth century ushered in the first biographies to use photographs, the first picturebook, and series books, such as the *Childhood of Famous Americans* series, which I will discuss in a later section on books about Amelia Earhart. The style of most of the biographies of this time period still included "lesson teaching." The biographees' lives were still quite sanitized, though they were made more engaging with the introduction of fabricated conversations. Bibliographies appeared, though the citations were incomplete.

The first biography I found to use photographs was *The Girl Who Found the Blue Bird: A Visit to Helen Keller* (1914) by Georgette Leblanc. It includes one photo of Helen and one of the author herself. Possibly because it is a translation, it is very poetic and flowery in style; I can't imagine a child enjoying it.

The Little Girl Who Waved: The Story of "Curly Top" by Clara A. Ford, published in 1937, is the first biography in the collection to resemble a picturebook. Though it is broken into short chapters, the sentences and paragraphs are shorter, and the vocabulary is simpler: "[Curly Top] listened. First there was a far-away whisper. Then a great rumbling, grumbling. Then a roar as the train rushed by the house."⁷

There is liberal use of photographs to help tell the story. The concluding pages are used as a picture timeline to illustrate how the land through which the train now runs—providing Curly Top with others to wave to—has changed over time. The book is told through the child's point of view and was obviously meant for a child to read to herself. Though pictures and story are static when measured by today's picturebook standards, it was revolutionary for its time.

This also is the time period of the first Ingri and Edgar d'Aulaire biography, *Pocahontas* (1946). It is the first picturebook I encountered in the fashion of what picturebooks look like today; that is, the larger size, full color, and simpler, shorter text. On rereading, it is apparent that it is a book of its time with the usual shortcomings—an overriding focus on Christianity, stereotypical and

condescending portrayal of Native Americans, didacticism—but with not nearly as many as books from earlier time periods.

The first biography I found to include a bibliography, albeit incomplete, was Jeannette Eaton's *A Daughter of the Seine: The Life of Madame Roland*, published in 1938. It also is unique in that it includes other features of nonfiction, such as a glossary, suggestions for additional reading, suggestions for projects, questions for discussion, and endnotes. Though the writing style is stuffy and adult-oriented, it possibly could have been for school use, although it is not noted as such in the book.

One notable exception to the style of the time period is Jeannette L. Gilder's *The Autobiography of a Tomboy* (1900). As a pioneer in journalism for women writing for several newspapers and magazines in New England, Gilder looks back at her childhood with a fresh voice. This autobiography is hilarious, told as if she were still that child; her use of description and dialogue makes this book a gem:

Every one said that I was a tomboy; and, being a good American, I bowed to the verdict of the majority and was happy. I never quite understood why a girl who climbed trees, clung to the tail-end of carts, and otherwise deported herself as a well-conditioned girl should not, was called a tomboy. It always seemed to me that, if she was anything she should not be, it was a tomgirl. However, tomboy was the accepted name for such girls as I was, and there was no use in arguing the case. After all, it made little difference. I did not care what they called me, so long as they let me alone; but that they were loathe to do."⁸

A hilarious tale, told through anecdotes, in an engaging writer's voice.

Biographies for children published in the second half of the twentieth century made liberal use of photographs of their subjects at various ages and at critical times. Stories of famous women became the rule, and the variety of fields from which the biographees were chosen was wide. Fabricated conversations started to disappear as authors treated their subjects much more objectively. Bibliographies and indexes were far more complete and more consistently appeared in the books. Modern women, as well as historic figures, began to be dealt with.

One book, Langston Hughes' *Famous American Negroes* (1954), is told simply and matter-of-factly, narrating both the biographees' accomplishments and incidents of racial discrimination. Interestingly enough, of the seventeen individuals listed, only three are women—Phyllis Wheatley, Harriet Tubman, and Marian Anderson. Unlike racial discrimination, little is said about discrimination because of gender.

Another biography of the time period, Julia Carson's *Mary Cassatt* (1966), was told more objectively than most previous



biographies, using only direct quotations. Reproductions of her paintings are included, as is a very complete bibliography.

Biases, however, were still apparent in the writing of the time period. For example, Tobi Tobias and Michael Hampshire, for the most part, created an acceptable picturebook, *Maria Tallchief*, with drawings done in soft, muted browns, whites, yellows, and oranges. The writing style is serviceable, though not particularly lively. However, the widely held assumption of a woman's role comes through in this line: "Maria's ballet career was a success, but her marriage to Mr. Balanchine had become very unhappy. Like most women, she wanted to have children."⁹

And in a 1983 biography of Sally Ride, *Sally Ride and the New Astronauts: Scientists in Space*, which does a good job of focusing on Ride's qualifications and contributions to the space program, author Karen O'Connor felt compelled to comment on Ride's appearance: "Before the session was over, trainers would hook the pretty, dark-haired astronaut by rope to a motorboat."¹⁰ I would be surprised to read similar comments about the appearance of male astronauts in books written during the same time period.

One biography that demonstrates how the writing style can hook a reader quickly is Florence Meiman White's 1980 book *First Woman in Congress: Jeannette Rankin*. Here's how the story begins:

"Jeannette! Jeannette!" It was her father's voice, urgent.

Jeannette was about to mount her mare. Instead, she turned to see John Rankin hurrying toward the stables, leading his favorite horse by the reins. Why was he walking? She wondered. Was there something wrong? She ran toward him. As they drew close to each other, her eyes opened wide with horror. Blood was gushing from the horse's right side.

"What happened, Father?" Jeannette asked anxiously.

"Got caught on a barbed wire fence. Get a needle and thread, Jeannette. Quickly!"

As her father led the injured horse into the stable, Jeannette ran to the house. In a few minutes, she returned with strong thread and a darning needle, a large clean towel and a bucket of hot water.

The twelve-year-old girl got down on her knees, washed the open sore, then carefully sewed together the torn flesh. The wounded animal writhed in pain. "You'll be fine, boy," she whispered, as she laid a comforting hand on the horse's head. He turned his grateful eyes upon her.

"Good work, Jeannette. You've done a fine job." Her father's voice was filled with admiration.¹¹

I can't imagine any child not being drawn into a book beginning in this way.

Another biography written during this time that broke new ground in how the story is told is Richard Gibbs' *Women Prime Ministers*, published in 1981. The writing is factual, though

somewhat opinionated, but what's the most fascinating is Gibbs' use of timelines, drawings, maps, and sidebars. This format, relatively new to the time, enlivens the stories of four pioneering women who broke stereotypes to rule their countries—Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the first woman prime minister of any country, who ruled Sri Lanka in the 1960s; Golda Meir, prime minister of Israel during the 1960s; Indira Gandhi, ruler of India in the 1960s and 1970s; and Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of Great Britain from the 1970s to 1990s.

More Modern Approaches

Beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the writing, illustrating, and publishing of biographies for children today, I found a definite shift in how biographies are created for children. Primary sources are regularly cited and even photographed and included in the book, far more extensive bibliographies are written, and much more attractive packaging of the books makes them irresistible.

Far more picturebooks are published, making the biographees' lives more interesting and accessible to younger readers. The writing style is often as if the story is being told orally, but there is also a tendency, especially in picturebooks, to blur the line between nonfiction and fiction.

I could cite many biographies from the Baldwin collection to illustrate what I mean, but I'll let just a handful of them tell this part of the story. The use of primary sources, especially diaries, and sometimes including photographs, became popular. *Billie Holiday* by Bud Kliment (1990) is written using many primary sources, including newspaper and magazine articles, which are photographically reproduced.

A biography of Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman?* by Patricia and Fredrick McKissack in 1992, allows Truth herself to tell her own story through selections from her autobiography, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*, published in 1850, and through the eyes of those who knew her.

And Susanna Reich, in her 1999 biography *Clara Schumann: Piano Virtuoso*, includes a final chapter explaining her liberal use of diaries, letters, music manuscripts, photos, drawings, concert programs, newspapers, magazines, books, and articles.

A couple of "almost biographies," or picturebooks that are a crucial snippet of a person's life, written in the late twentieth century, are William Miller's *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (1994) and Michael Bedard's *The Divide* (1997). The first tells of Hurston's mother's death and the profound impact she and the storytellers of the community made on her future writing life. The second relates the point in Willa Cather's life when her family moved west, and the enormous responsibility it placed on her. It is written very poetically and could easily be confused with fiction. Both are beautifully illustrated.

Some are told in a style that appeals strongly to the senses, such as the McKissacks' story of playwright Lorraine Hansberry. Published in 1998, *Young, Black, and Determined: A Biography*

of *Lorraine Hansberry* is told in a way that places the reader alongside the subject. In describing Hansberry's childhood home, the authors write, "Children played hopscotch and tag together in the park, shared dill pickles that reeked of garlic, and fought over who said what about whom."¹²

Others are told with an excess of drama. Josephine Poole's 1997 picturebook *Joan of Arc* is illustrated in rich, classic paintings, but the dramatic text blurs the edges between fact and fiction. "But that was not the end. A saint is like a star. A star and a saint shine forever."¹³

Still others are intentionally fictionalized. When Nikki Grimes wrote *Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*, she noted, "The form of the following story is fictional, but the story itself is based on fact."¹⁴ In twenty-one free verse poems, Bessie's life is revealed through the point of view of others who were important in her life.

One contemporary biographer, Don Brown, a prolific picture-book writer and illustrator, has created stories of lesser-known women that reflect their personalities. In *Ruth Law Thrills a Nation*, he pairs humorous, colorful watercolor paintings with a snappy text to show the verve and daring of Law:

On November 19, 1916, Ruth Law tried to fly from Chicago to New York City in one day.

It had never been done before.

It was a frosty, blustery morning, Ruth woke up before dawn, but she did not feel the cold. To get used to the cold weather, she had slept in a tent on the roof of a Chicago hotel.¹⁵

In his 1999 title *Rare Treasure: Mary Anning and Her Remarkable Discoveries*, Brown combines mysterious, earth-toned illustrations with rich text:

Mary Anning lived from 1799 to 1847, but her spirit dwelled in a time millions of years ago, when the monsters and dragons we now call dinosaurs roamed. She had little money, but she was rich in spirit. She was unschooled, but the professors heeded her words. She rarely strayed from her home, but her name became known everywhere. Mary Anning pried fossils from the ground, but it was knowledge she unearthed.¹⁶

And Brown mixes hazy, ethereal imagery and a contemplative tone in *Far Beyond the Garden Gate: Alexandra David-Neel's Journey to Lhasa*:

Alexandra and Yongden tramp for miles through silent forests. Clearings reveal "shining snow-clad mountains, towering high in the blue sky, frozen torrents and glittering waterfalls hanging like gigantic . . . curtains from the rugged rocks."¹⁷

Brown has helped set the bar high for others to reach in creating engaging picturebook biographies.

Two other titles—one an autobiography, the other a biography—tell their stories in unique voices. Ruby Bridges tells her

own story in *Through My Eyes*, a picturebook. She also adds the voices of several others on both sides of the controversy. Alternating between stunning photos and revealing text, she brings to life her amazing story:

When I was six years old, the civil rights movement came knocking at the door. It was 1960, and history pushed in and swept me up in a whirlwind. At the time, I knew little about the racial fears and hatred in Louisiana, where I was growing up. Young children never know about racism at the start. It's we adults who teach it.¹⁸

One biography featuring a unique voice is *My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/Me llamo Celia: La vida de Celia Cruz* by Monica Brown, published in 2004. It is the first bilingual biography of a woman that I uncovered in the collection, and the colorful, energetic illustrations and melodic text echo the salsa music Celia created:

Sugar! My voice is strong, smooth, and sweet. I will make you feel like dancing. Close your eyes and listen. My voice feels like feet skipping on cool wet sand, like running under a waterfall, like rolling down a hill. My voice climbs and rocks and dips and flips with the sounds of congas beating and trumpets blaring. Boom boom boom! Beat the congas. Clap clap clap! Go the hands. Shake shake shake! Go the hips. I am the Queen of Salsa and I invite you to come dance with me.¹⁹

I can't think of a better way to use style to hook children into a biography!

And radically different formats for relating other's lives have come on the children's books scene. The best example I discovered at the Baldwin Collection of Historic Children's Literature is *To Dance*, an autobiography by Siena Cherson Siegel, published in 2006. Michele Gorman, in a 2008 article published in *School Library Journal*, sums up the benefits of graphic novels for children:

Graphic novels are now addressing important personal and social issues like the power of imagination, being true to one's self, the benefits of teamwork, and how to cope with divorce and bullying. Teachers and librarians are also beginning to realize that these books are perfect for young readers who are making the transition from picturebooks to text-only titles. And with graphic novels' hypnotic power to pull kids into a story, they're also perfect for promoting recreational or free voluntary reading—one of the most effective ways to increase literacy and create lifelong readers.²⁰

Siegel, a Puerto Rican native and former dancer in the New York City Ballet, wrote *To Dance*, a Sibert Honor title, in an informative but emotional style. Her husband, Mark Siegel, illustrated the book in a lively, energetic manner. What a treat to be able to offer children biographies as enticing as this!

Earhart in Biographies

The first three children's books about Amelia Earhart, as I studied them at the Baldwin Collection, made their appearance in the

first half of the twentieth century. The first, published in 1942, is called *Heroines of the Sky*, a collection of an overview of eighteen women aviators. Earhart's chapter is titled "Amelia Earhart: She Dramatized Flying."

Author Jean Adams contends that Earhart's career

"has already been so completely revealed there is little left to say. For this reason we shall content ourselves here with highlighting a few spots in her meteoric life. Those who are curious to know more about Amelia Earhart must turn to both her own books and those of her husband, George Palmer Putnam."²¹

The book is written for older children, told matter-of-factly, but interestingly. The authors conclude that "today, therefore, it is very hard to decide whether Amelia Earhart was the greatest woman flier of her day or merely the greatest personality of her sex who ever flew."²²

The second Earhart book is devoted only to her life, *Amelia Earhart: Heroine of the Skies*.²³

It is told in a novel-like fashion with liberties taken in dialogue and frequent editorial comments. Earhart's family life and personal shortcomings are shortchanged, but still, it is an interesting read. The book includes a bibliography with author, year, and title only, contains an index, and is the first biography on Earhart I've found with a chronology.

The third title, *Amelia Earhart: Kansas Girl*, is part of the Childhood of Famous Americans series. Only thirty books in the 199-book series were about women. The Baldwin collection owns sixteen. Besides Earhart, they include Jane Addams, Sacagawea, Julia Ward Howe, Clara Barton, Pocahontas, Martha Washington, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Juliette Low, Lucretia Mott, Maria Mitchell, Molly Pitcher, Susan Anthony, Jessie Fremont, Dolly Madison, and Elizabeth Blackwell.

Like other books of its time, these are written in novel-like fashion, in a rather gushy, sappy, and dramatized style. The authors took liberties with dialogue, sanitized or ignored negative issues or character traits, and played up individualism, yet carefully retained their subject's sense of femininity and religious devotion. A scene from Amelia's first sight of a plane at a fair will illustrate the style:

Amelia stopped again. "Look at the beautiful paper hats, Papa. May we have one?"



"Oh, yes, Papa. Please!" Pidge [Amelia's sister] echoed.

"If you'll promise then to come with me to see the aeroplane with no more delay. I'll get you each one," Papa said.

Amelia and Pidge tried first one hat, then another. There were flat little circles covered with paper flowers. They tied under the chin with silk ribbons. There were bright bonnets with flower-trimmed brims. They were all so gay and pretty. It seemed wise to try each one on the counter. It was hard to make a choice . . .

"Will it fly again today, Papa?" asked Amelia.

"If the rain stops. But we'd better go home."

"Let's wait and see it fly again," Amelia begged. "Did you hear the whir of the engine? Did you see the wings tip like a bird's? I'd like to see it again."

Papa looked at her in surprise. "For a little girl who would rather ride the ponies or buy a paper hat, you've changed in a hurry, Melia."

"I just didn't understand about aeroplanes. I didn't know they would be so exciting. I'd rather see it than anything else at the fair."²⁴

No references are listed in the series, but often the author printed an acknowledgment at the beginning of the book noting people or written materials consulted. They all contain a chronology and an index and are illustrated with black-and-white sketches, which are listed near the table of

contents. Early chapters establish the biographee's personality while the final chapter sums up her life's work. The books are amazingly similar in style and content, considering that they have differing authors, who all happen to be women.

Incidentally, fourteen of the original books are currently being reissued as the Young Patriots series published by Patria Press; four of them have female subjects, including one about Earhart. They retain the original authors, but employ new illustrators. Amazingly little has changed in the writing; a few portions have been shortened or given more modern language, others elaborated on, and some paragraphs made more politically correct. In a few instances, whole chapters have been omitted. For example, a chapter titled "Pioneers and Indians" in Earhart's book was left out. Another chapter in her book was changed from "Girl Pilot" to "Real Pilot" and two sections, "What Happened Next?" and "The Mystery of

Amelia Earhart,” were substituted for the final chapter. Other books in the series added afterwards, chronologies, and glossaries.

The two biographies of Earhart in the Baldwin Collection written in the mid-twentieth century did not vary much from earlier works. *The Story of Amelia Earhart* by Adele de Leeu (1955) read much like the Howe books from the Childhood of Famous Americans series, only longer, with more details. And the second, written in 1962 by John Parlin, is a poorly written early reader, part of the Discovery Book series. It has full-page black, white, tan, and turquoise illustrations, and is only a barely serviceable title.

Two picturebooks present new layouts for telling today’s readers about Earhart. In the first, Cynthia Chin-Lee’s 2005 book *Amelia to Zora: Twenty-Six Women Who Changed the World*, the alphabet book format begins with Earhart. Chin-Lee notes that she alphabetized by the women’s given names, as last names usually represent father’s or husband’s names. The entries for Amelia and the others—some famous, others not—each give a blurb of informative text, a quotation, and a collage portrait.

The second picturebook, Shelley Tanaka’s 2008 book *Amelia Earhart: The Legend of the Lost Aviator*, is a melding of many presentations of Earhart’s life. It is a longer picturebook that combines captioned photos, full-page paintings, sidebars of additional stories, timelines, and varied layouts and background colors. The text is told as a story, but is very factual and finishes with an epilogue about the various theories of her disappearance, a bibliography of books (including her own and her husband’s), articles, websites, source notes, photography credits, and an index. These two titles present the world of Earhart to children in a far different fashion from the fictionalized narratives from the early to middle 1900s.

As Helen Keller said, “Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing at all.”²⁵ And what an adventure biographies for children are today! Those titles from the earliest days of books for children have paved the way for the gems we can offer girls today. I’ve decided to never miss an opportunity to do so.

Yes, you’ll never believe the women I’ve met:

- *Mary Ann Bickerdyke as she nursed her “boys” in the field during the Civil War;*
- *Marian Anderson as she closed her eyes and sang from her heart in front of the Lincoln Memorial, having been denied entrance into Constitution Hall;*
- *Bella Abzug grilling another member of Congress to make a political point;*
- *Aretha Franklin singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the 1968 Democratic National Convention;*
- *Billie Jean King historically defeating Bobby Riggs in a “Battle of the Sexes” tennis match;*
- *Maria Tallchief as she performed in Swan Lake with the New York City Ballet;*
- *Rachel Carson as she studied the effects of DDT on the environment;*
- *Corazon Aquino as she took the presidential oath of office in the Philippines;*
- *Winnie Mandela as she addressed a huge rally of the African National Congress while her husband was still imprisoned and she was a banned person . . .* 📖

The Bechtel Experience

In 2006 and 2007, while serving on the ALSC Notable Children’s Books Committee, one of my fellow committee members won the Bechtel Fellowship. I was awed and intrigued, and upon questioning her, I discovered that it’s the opportunity of a lifetime—four weeks of reading, study, contemplation, and writing about historic children’s books in the Baldwin Collection at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

I waited until the timing was right for me and my family, applied, and won! The proposed study was a no-brainer for me—as you see, I’m a child born in the late 1950s into a very poor rural farm family. Being child number eight out of nine, and a girl, the opportunities in life seemed very limited. So a study of biographies for children was a natural fit.

The four weeks flew by. I was thrilled to see the stacks of the collection, get acquainted with the helpful staff, and become oriented to the catalog system. After talking with curator Rita Smith about the collection, I narrowed my search to a chronological search of women’s biographies only, with a mini-study of books on Amelia Earhart, a special interest of mine.

There was much more available than I could ever read, but I was able to study the most pertinent and interesting. I’ve put the experience to work in several ways: by writing this article, giving professional presentations, strengthening my biography collection, and sharing with my university students. I also plan to begin a Heroes Book Club for at-risk students at my school.

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Cut the Confusion

Marketing for Self-Sufficiency

By Rebecca Phillips

There has been a lot of buzz throughout the library world about marketing the library. Should libraries look more like bookstores? Should budget dollars be spent on advertisement and marketing materials? How do we make the library an easy place for patrons to find information? Well, I certainly don't have the answers, but what I can share with you are some best practices that have worked at my library. I work at a 19,000 square foot branch of a large county library system. When my branch opened ten years ago, it was with the idea that the children's department would be staffed with two librarians who would then station themselves at a desk in the department to field all questions for those under 4 feet tall. Fast forward through ten years of economic crises and budget cuts and we now have just one overworked children's librarian and no service points other than the checkout desk. There is no direct line of sight between the checkout desk and the children's depart-

ment, and as a result we rely on a lot of self-directed marketing strategies.

The best way to get started is just to try a couple of things and let your staff and patrons get used to the changes. As you adapt, so will they. Pretty soon those questions at the desk will diminish and you'll have made a whole new set of users self-sufficient. ☺



We try to put high circulating items up front. For us, that is the early readers like Dora, Frog & Toad, and Thomas the Tank Engine.



For non-fiction, we use both text and visual guides to help kids find the right Dewey area; pictured here—reader's theater and plays.



For the older kids, we have a special set of shelves in front of the regular chapter books that are designated for "favorite series." Here we can push popular series, like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, while also highlighting series that might get lost in the stacks, like Go Girl.



Rebecca Phillips is a Senior Library Assistant for the Brown County Library in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She is currently seeking her MLIS at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.



We've pulled a collection that is normally scattered about in chapter books and put it in the favorite series section. Choosing "sports stories" makes it easier for shelvers to identify what books belong in the collection. Don't stress too much about labels, the kids will find what they are looking for and you and your staff will adjust too.



During school breaks, and especially in the summer, the favorite series shelf is so popular that many of its inhabitants are checked out. In that case, we use shelf talkers to guide readers to new authors or series.



A picture is worth a thousand words and this sign sits above the favorite series shelf and shows the cover and title for each series. We don't re-catalog the books, so this acts as a ready reference for both kids and shelvers. We try to keep our shelves as current as possible; re-evaluating every six to nine months.

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make honest pictures. I make art with my hands. It has flaws, but so do I.

I am aware that e-books are changing our world of books and bookmaking. They offer convenience, but by their nature, I'm not sure they can be timeless. Their selling point is that there is limitless information beyond that backlit page. But I believe there is an infinite beauty in the limitations of paper books. I don't think it can be mimicked or replaced by pixels on a screen. To me, e-books are not books. The more flash and whiz-bang we add, the more we limit the possibilities of our own imagination. Books are simple. They must be felt. The copies of my very favorite books are not pristine. They are worn and dog-eared and a little bit dirty because they are loved.

My art teacher in high school was Mr. Mike Foye. He taught me well and still

does today. His AP art history final exam was an essay question in which he asked seventeen-year-olds to answer questions regarding the following passage.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day . . ." Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real, you don't mind being hurt. . . . It doesn't happen all at once. . . .

You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

This slightly abridged quote from Margery Williams's *Velveteen Rabbit* makes the ground slip beneath me. One of the many reasons I am thankful for this honor is that I believe this medal gives my little, quiet book a chance at maybe being loved enough to become Real for someone other than me.

I am extremely grateful to you all. 🐰

Portrait of the Reader as a Young Child

Assisting the New Reader

LORETTA CARAVETTE

Teachers, parents, and librarians work hard to make a connection between books and children so that learning and loving reading is possible. Finding the right book is very important for the new reader because we want these early experiences to be good ones. But what is the right book for a child just beginning to understand language, letters, and words? What book is too hard? Too easy? Connecting book to child can be a frustrating challenge.

And who are these beginning readers? What are their needs at five years old? How are they different at seven? Defining these children, a constantly evolving jumble of personalities, endless energy, and constant questions, can be just as daunting a task.

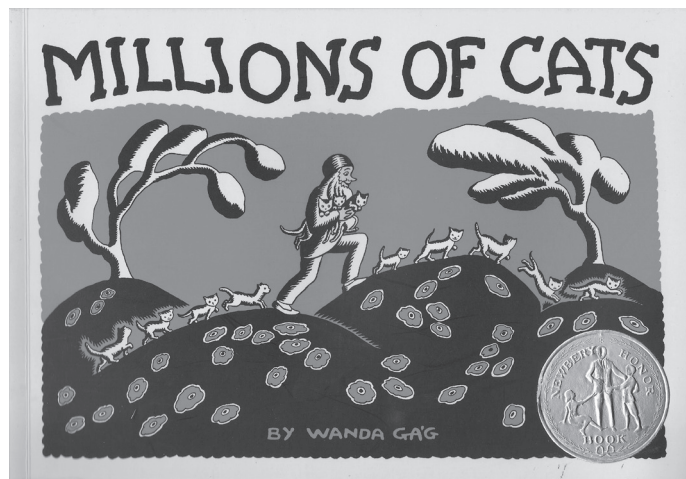
In this article, I will explore the stages of a child's development, identifying what a child needs to learn at each level, and what types of books will assist them throughout the process.

Early Literacy

As the first teachers of children, parents influence and prepare their children for the world, for their educational experience, and for their future literacy success. Literacy, quite simply, begins at



Loretta Caravette received her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has written for several children's magazines. This article was her final MFA lecture.



home. Parents introduce the world of reading by reading aloud to their children even before their children can walk or talk.

Research on early literacy and brain development indicates that reading to a child from a very early age influences his performance in school for the better.¹

This finding motivated the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) to create the first edition of the Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® program, which provided libraries with vital tools developed by Dr. Grover C. Whitehurst and Dr. Christopher Lonigan to help prepare parents for their critical role as their child's first teacher.²

In Edmund Henderson's book *Learning to Read and Spell: The Child's Knowledge of Words*, he found that children reared in a nonreading home learned only the grammar of the spoken word. "They are naive about the special reference systems and organizational devices by which the written language compensates for the absence of eye contact, gesture, and stress."³

Author Mem Fox said that a child who has been read to can "begin to understand the look of the print and the way words work in sentences, and how the world works—why this happens and that happens—and how it all comes together to mean something."⁴

Picture-book reading provides children with many of the skills necessary for school—vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories, and language. Reading aloud to a child also introduces books as memorable and fun.

As a child continues to grow and develop, learning the alphabet and the letters' sounds connects the next piece of the reading puzzle. Helping a child develop letter-sound sensitivity promotes the development of reading because letters in written language begin to correspond to sounds, like the letter *B* makes the "buh" sound. Understanding that words are made of smaller sounds helps children "break the code" between written language (letters) and spoken language (sounds).⁵

The child who begins to realize that letters make their own sounds, that letters put together make a word, and that words together make a sentence, takes the next step to understanding meaning. Henderson found that, initially, children do not differentiate between the word and the object that it represents. The word "chair" is associated with the child's kitchen chair. Words that are more abstract—like "the," "and," "a," "this," or, "that"—are not understood or associated with the construction of a sentence. However, the more children are read to, the more they hear these words and can begin to connect these abstract words with the sentence that add to its meaning.⁶

When a child takes a picture book that has been read to them over and over and begins to "read" the story, they may not say the exact story word-for-word, but they can tell the story. The child has begun to understand the concept of words telling the story. This indicates that a child is ready to take the next step toward beginning, or independent, reading.

This transition can be difficult. Beth Kephart, in her book *Seeing Past Z: Nurturing the Imagination in a Fast-forward World*, tells of her own son's reluctance. "It's so much better when you read to me," he sighs. "All I have to do when you read is wait for the story to come."⁷

Children take only three years to master all the necessary reading skills as they progress through the five definite stages defined by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. These stages are labeled the Emergent Reader, the Early Reader, the Transitional Reader, the Self-Extending Reader, and the Advanced Reader.⁸

No one child will fit exactly into one category, and many children will exhibit behaviors in more than one. These stages are useful in helping us think about the broad characteristics of readers. They are a tool to make good choices for children, not a child's label.⁹

For the purpose of this article, I will use Fountas and Pinnell's stages as the organizing categories.

The Emergent Reader

Most children in kindergarten, between the ages of four and five, are emergent readers. At one time, kindergarten was considered primarily a socializing process, but today, in many areas of the country, children actually have to pass a reading test to graduate into first grade.

These children may already "read" favorite picture books they have heard repeatedly. They also know how to use pictures to support reading. So, it is not so surprising that the story format

for the emergent reader is a picture story. This helps the child transition from pictures and text that tell the story to a storyline that is carried by the text with some pictures.

Emergent readers rely on language and meaning as they read simple text with only one or two lines of print. They are beginning to control early behaviors, such as matching spoken words one by one with written words on the page, recognizing how print is arranged on pages, and moving left to right in reading. When reading, an emergent reader may point to each word. The emergent reader is still learning the alphabet, the letter names, shapes, and sounds. They can recognize upper- and lowercase letters. They are beginning to learn sound-symbol relationships and are able to read consonant-vowel-consonant words.

The child recognizes frequently used words like "the" and "a," as well as more complex words like "tree," "boy," and "girl." They are just figuring out what a word really is, how letters go together, and how letters are different from each other. However, they do not understand contractions and possessives.¹⁰

Three features, in whole text, support beginning readers—predictability (the use of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition), imaginability and familiarity of concepts (words with high imagery values; those associated with clear and concrete images), and word density (the number of unique words to the total number of words in the text).¹¹ Each feature is a temporary and adjustable form of support. These features in the earliest readers are highly exaggerated. For example, word density for the Emergent Reader is very limited. There are no unique or unusual words. In the next stage (Early Reader), the word density increases and more unusual words are introduced. Over time, as the reader's experience increases, each stage is reduced in emphasis.¹²

Examples of Emergent Reader books include *Bob Books* by Bobby Lynn Maslen, *I Like Stars* by Margaret Wise Brown, *Rain* by Robert Kalan, *Roll Over! A Counting Book* by Merle Peek, and *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins.

Action and repetition command these stories. Most words are simple, one syllable, and have fewer than six letters. The sentence length is five to six words, and there are no contractions. The word count is 250–500 words, mostly concept words—nouns and verbs. There are no chapters. It is one single story, just like the picture books they have seen before.

Within the Emergent Reader categories, there are levels of difficulties. For instance, the *Bob Books* are a beginner level for the emergent reader whereas *Rosie's Walk* would be a little more advanced. Even *I Like Stars* has a few difficult words. The levels within the categories are not defined. It is only by reading through these books that teachers, parents, and librarians will be able to recognize the degrees of difficulty and help children make their selections.

The Early Reader

The next stage, Early Reader, is where most publishing houses begin defining levels. These children are six to seven years old

and often in first grade. They have experienced life thus far as fun and free and open. First grade can be a very difficult transition. First-graders must now pay attention and focus for longer periods of time. They will have to adjust to the rigors of a full day of school. How the Early Reader performs during this developmentally critical year will set the tone for the rest of the child's educational experience.

Early Readers continue to develop an understanding of the alphabet and symbol-sounds relationships. They acquire a small core of high frequency words that they recognize and learn to write. They build on a set of high-frequency words. High-frequency words are those that appear most often in printed materials. Early readers will continue to increase their knowledge of high frequency words throughout the five stages. They recognize different kinds of text: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

First graders are learning to derive meaning from what they read. They decode new words by applying the letter-sound relationship for single letters and pairs of letters, such as "sh" or "er," and short and long vowel patterns, such as the silent "e." The prefix "un-" is introduced at this level as well as the suffix "-ing." Past tense, contractions, and possessives are all introduced at this level. Early readers can read books with several lines of print, keeping the meaning in mind as they use some strategies to solve unfamiliar words. They will monitor their own reading to make sure it makes sense and sounds like the language they know.¹³

The format for early reader books still has illustrations on every page, but the format is more developed. An example of dialogue level can be seen in *Max and Mo's Halloween Surprise* by Patricia Lakin:

Max and Mo were best friends.

They lived in a school . . . in an art room . . . in a cozy cage.

Max liked to make things. Mo liked to read things.

"I am reading that paper," said Mo.

"But I am making a chain," said Max.

"No more chains!" said Mo.¹⁴

This book has a small trim size and more pages. Sometimes these readers are broken up into smaller chapters. The stories are still told through action, but with dialogue (and proper punctuation). Sentences are longer, but are broken down into phrases. This structure allows the early reader to read a line and get a break before tackling the text of the sentences as a whole. The sentence length is still around five to six words per line. The words have multiple syllables, up to eight lines of text on each page, a wider variety of punctuation, and smaller print size and text in different places, including the top, bottom, left page, and right page.

Other examples of early readers include *A New House for Mole and Mouse* by Harriet Ziefert, *Hi! Fly Guy* by Tedd Arnold, *Too*

Many Dogs by Lori Haskins, *Curious George* by H. A. Rey, and *Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik.

Many teachers have used Minarik's *Little Bear* as a benchmark book. If a child can read this book with about 90 percent accuracy, it is an indication that the child is ready to move into the next level.¹⁵

At this stage, a child needs to practice reading as much as possible. Reading is the only way they can become better readers. Reading also helps develop good writing style, increase vocabulary, and improve grammatical competence.¹⁶

According to Bernadette Nowakowski, director of Children's and Young Adult Services for the Chicago Public Library,

To get a child to read, you need to find out what that child enjoys. What turns that child on? Do they have a hobby? The Easy Readers are not listed in the public library according to stages. So the librarians need a pocket full of books that they know about and have read to help a child make a selection, and that should include nonfiction as well.¹⁷

Getting a child to read at this stage is no different from getting a child to read at any stage, but as parents, teachers, and librarians, sometimes we forget that important ingredient—interest. Books can become like vegetables: "Read this, it's good for you."

There is no doubt that children will have to read some things they are not interested in, but if they know a mystery book is tucked in a book bag waiting for them, reading something else until then might not be bad. Children don't always know what they like or what will interest them. Helping children discover a passion or an interest can go a long way to developing their reading skills.

The Transitional Reader

The second-grader, seven to eight years old, is called the Transitional Reader. Transitional Readers are more fluent readers and are reading for more meaning. They are able to read unknown text with more independence than early readers. They can read texts with many lines of print. Transitional readers use meaning, grammar, and letter cues more fully. They use phonics and page clues to read new words. Compound words are introduced. They have mastered a larger number of high frequency words and use pictures in a limited way while reading. They use prefixes, suffixes, and roots to determine the meaning of words. They are also learning to use a dictionary and thesaurus to discover the meanings of words. The biggest developmental change is that these children have become less self-oriented than they were in kindergarten and first grade. As a result, they have stopped generalizing characters, and individual personalities have become important in stories.

An eight-year-old's interests, reading skills, and ego make reading picture books unacceptable, and heavily illustrated picture stories are often overlooked because they seem too juvenile. But at this level, the child is still not emotionally ready or skilled enough for the "big kid" chapter books. For that reason,

Transitional Reader books don't have a lot of illustrations. The text gives more details about the characters, personality quirks, or other ways to remember them.¹⁸

Examples of books for Transitional Readers include the Frog and Toad series by Arnold Lobel, the Zelda and Ivy series by Laura McGee Kvasnosky, the Houndsley and Catina series by James Howe, the Amelia Bedelia series by Peggy Parrish, and the Mercy Watson series by Kate DiCamillo.

Books for Transitional Readers have three to six chapters, and each chapter is its own story with a beginning, middle, and an end. In chapter 1, the characters are identified and the theme is set up. The rest of the chapters build on the theme with the last chapter summing up the story. These readers have more pages, longer and more complex sentences, and a richer vocabulary. They use paragraphs and two-part sentences, with conjunctions and prepositions. They are forty-five to sixty pages and have between one thousand and fifteen hundred words.

Here is an excerpt from Cynthia Rylant's *Henry and Mudge: The First Book*:

Henry searched for a dog. "Not just any dog," said Henry.

"Not a short one," he said. "Not a curly one," he said.

"And no pointed ears." Then he found Mudge.

Mudge had floppy ears, not pointed. And Mudge had straight fur, not curly.

But Mudge was short. "Because he's a puppy," Henry said. "He'll grow."¹⁹

During these different stages of development—whether the Early Reader, the Transitional Reader, or the next stage, Self-

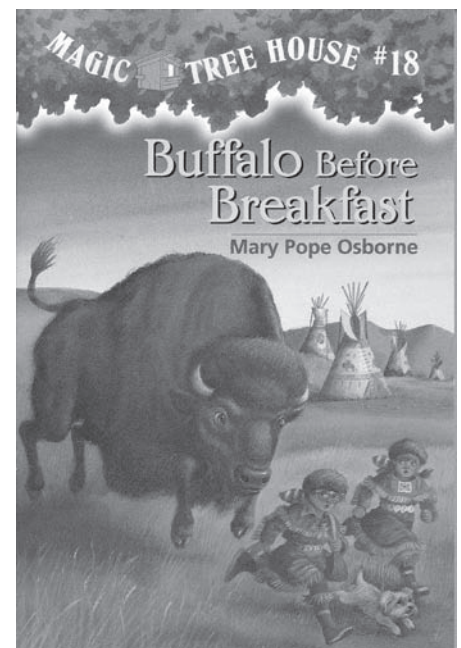
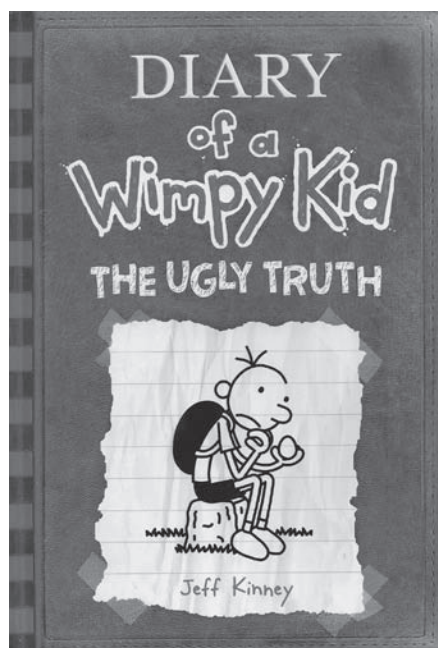
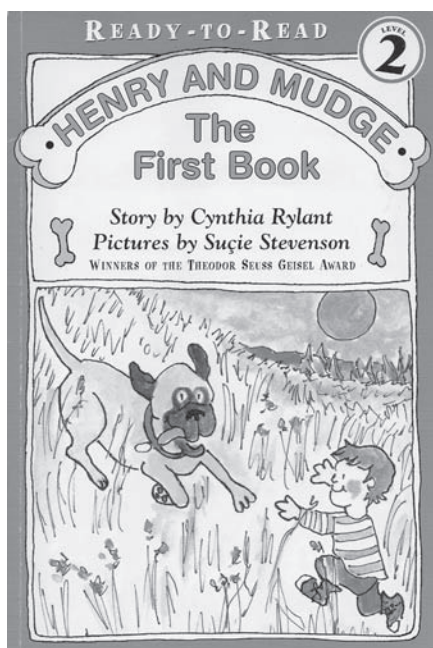
Extending Reader—some parents and librarians may be concerned that giving a book that is too easy or too hard will be harmful to the new reader. Some teachers suggest using the "Five-Finger Method." Hold up one hand, and have a child read a few pages from the book. Take one finger down for each word he stumbles on. One finger down—the book is too easy. Two to three fingers down—the book is the right level. Four to five fingers down—the book is too hard.²⁰

Reading takes a lot of practice. As adults, we read books at different levels. We may call it "light reading." Children are no different. If the book is below their reading level but is a topic they find interesting, it won't hurt them to read it. It allows them to practice their reading skills. If the book is too difficult, one where children will need assistance, then it is an opportunity for the parents to participate in the reading.

Laura Backes, in her book *Best Books for Children Who Think They Hate to Read*, also suggests matching the book to the child, not the child to a book that he or she should supposedly be able to read. A child will be motivated to read outside of school if the book is a topic he finds of interest.²¹

The Self-Extending Reader

We are now at the stage known as the Self-Extending Reader, or Fluent Reader, eight- to nine-year-olds in third grade. These readers have moved from learning to read to reading to learn. They understand there is a purpose for reading: for pleasure, to get directions, to gather information. Their books address more serious topics, demanding not only reading skill but also thoughtful consideration. These readers identify themselves with the world around them. They are developing preferences and taste and deciding what topics interest them. They are able to read for meaning and have a very large core of high-frequency words and many other words that they can quickly and automatically recognize.



Self-extending readers have developed systems for learning more about the process as they read so that they build skills simply by encountering many different kinds of text with a variety of new words. Self-extending readers can analyze and make excellent attempts at new, multisyllable words. These children have reached the end of the primary reading level and are making the transition into chapter books. The chapters are now all part of the same story; there is a cast of characters, each chapter has a problem to solve, but the entire book has one big story problem, the sentences are longer, and there are fewer illustrations. They are still building background knowledge and learning how to apply what they know to longer and more difficult text.²²

These readers get hooked on characters, which can explain the popularity of series with twenty or more books involving the same cast. Such books include the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney, the *Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne, the *Time Warp Trio* series by Jon Scieszka, and the *A to Z Mysteries* series by Ron Roy.

The Advanced Reader

This is the final stage of reading development. Students who are advanced in reading have moved well beyond the early “learning to read” phase of literacy learning. They are still learning and developing their strategies while they have varied experiences in reading. There is virtually no text that an advanced reader cannot “read,” but their prior knowledge, sophisticated word-solving strategies, and understanding of the nuances of a complex text are still developing.²³

These children are reading books such as *Dirty Beasts* by Roald Dahl, *Ramona and Her Father* by Beverly Cleary, and *The Comeback Dog* by Jane Resh Thomas.

Learning to read does not require any special mental functions, but it does require a lot of practice. The new reader must have the proper tools to assist in developing his reading skills, and those tools are lots and lots of books.²⁴ The easy readers, as we know them today, did not exist in the early 1920s. A child learning to read had a very restricted number of books at his disposal. Most primers were written to reinforce reading skills, but failed to introduce reading as a pleasurable experience.

The easy reader most people are familiar with is the Dick and Jane series, developed in the late 1920s by William Gray and Zerna Sharp for the educational publisher Scott Foresman. From the 1930s through the 1960s, this series was used by more than 85 million students.²⁵ The Dick and Jane books were based on the belief that children learned to read best by memorizing a small handful of “sight words,” and then repeated them over and over—the “look/say” method.²⁶

Here is an example from *Dick and Jane* by Gray and Sharp:

Dick said, “Look, look.

Look up.

Look up, up, up.”

Jane said, “Run, run. Run Dick, run. Run and see.”²⁷

After almost thirty years of using Dick and Jane in schools, critics began to notice that U.S. children couldn’t read very well. Rudolf Flesch revealed that

the most serious drawback of all the English reading instruction . . . is the drawback of the word-method. . . . The child who fails to grasp the content of what he reads is usually a poor reader in the mechanical sense. . . . The chief source of difficulty in getting the content of reading is imperfect mastery of the mechanics of reading. . . . We must train the child to respond vocally to the sight of letters.”²⁸

However, Dick and Jane did make us realize that new readers need special types of books to help them learn to read.

In 1954, Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Hersey wrote:

In the classroom, boys and girls are confronted with books that have insipid illustrations depicting the slicked up lives of other children, feature abnormally courteous unnaturally clean boys and girls. In bookstores anyone can buy brighter, livelier books featuring strange and wonderful animals and children who behave naturally, i.e., sometimes misbehave. Given incentive from school boards, publishers could do as well with primers.²⁹

Theodor Seuss Geisel read the article and responded to Hersey’s challenge. His publisher, Random House, sent him a list of four hundred common words that young readers would need to learn, and *The Cat in the Hat* was born. When interviewed, Geisel revealed that the book took nine months to write because the word restriction made it very difficult. The title for the book came about because he wanted it to rhyme and the only two suitable rhyming words were “cat” and “hat.”³⁰

Around the same time, HarperCollins introduced the Little Bear series by Minarik with illustrations by Maurice Sendak. Minarik was a mother and teacher who saw a need for books that her students and young daughter could read.

These books created a new category now known as the easy reader. Children loved them and the publishing world was quick to respond.

Today there is a large selection of easy readers, including HarperCollins/Harper Trophy I Can Read series, Random House’s Stepping Stone and Step into Reading series, Simon and Schuster’s Ready-to-Read, and Puffin Book’s Easy-to-Read, just to name a few.

Anne Hoppe, editor of HarperCollins, said, “We don’t teach children how to read. We give them books they can read so they will want to read more and feel validated in their skills.”³¹

By defining the stages of the new reader, we have created a portrait of a child. We can now see the process they must go

through to become a reader. As librarians, parents, and teachers, we must become familiar with all the resources available. We must read those easy readers, become familiar with both fiction and nonfiction, and know their characters and stories.

In knowing these books, we can now listen to children and help them find a book that will interest them. If we can do this, we are ensuring a child is on her way to learning to read and loving every word of it. ☺

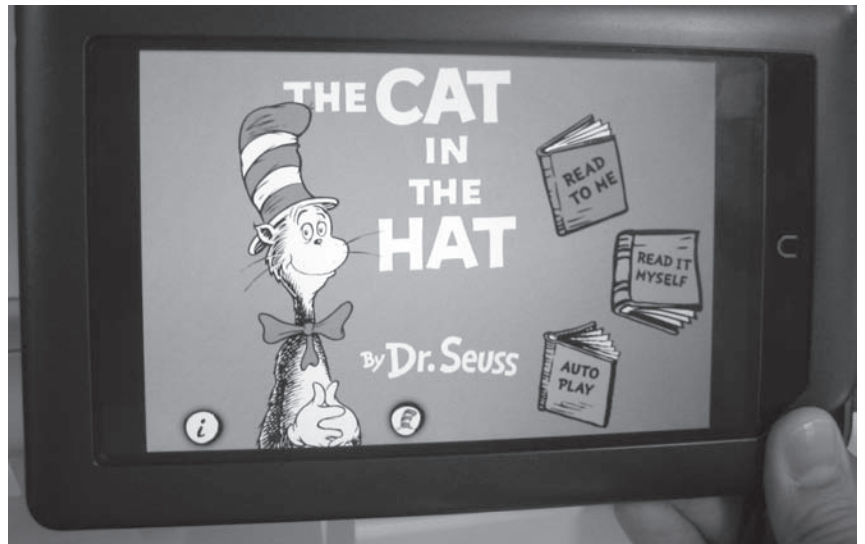
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Into a Digital World

A Q&A about Digital Picture Books

Travis Jonker



The Cat in the Hat, as seen on Barnes and Noble's Nook.

Last year had been shaping up to be the year digital picture books hit it big. There had been rumblings for some time—Amazon's Kindle, the Barnes and Noble Nook, and the Apple iPad all heralded the e-book's fanfare (and have sold well), but these declarations focused on grown-up reading, ignoring a category—picture books—that had been severely trailing the pack . . . until now.

Due to several factors—small screen sizes, color limitations, high prices—picture books didn't make the digital jump as quickly or easily as middle-grade novels.

But now that digital picture books are coming out at a rapid clip, what's a librarian to do? How do we know what's new? What's good? How are they created? Let's take a look at some of the big questions.

Q: What is a digital picture book?

The terms “e-book” and “app” are often used interchangeably, but they are two separate things. The main differences are in platform and interactivity. E-books are basically digitized versions of print titles (some may feature narration) and are available for download on devices like the Kindle, Nook, and Sony Reader, among others.

An “app” (an abbreviation of “application”) is consumed on a smartphone or handheld computer (most commonly associated with Apple's iPhone and iPad), and increases the interactivity level.¹

Picture book apps have added features that take advantage of touch-screen technology. It's common for apps to include motion elements, narration, sounds, music, and objects that can be manipulated by touch.²

Adding to the confusion, Apple also has its own form of e-books (called iBooks).

Q: How do you read them?

The pack of picture e-book and app readers is large, but the Nook Color, Kindle, and iPad appear to be the most common. As far as picture books, the iPad and Nook Color are the two devices to focus on; both display the vivid colors picture books demand, as well as touchscreen technology that makes for a more intimate reading experience.

Unfortunately for readers, each comes with its own quirks in terms of compatibility. Many librarians (this one included) will fill

Travis Jonker is the Elementary School Librarian for Wayland (Mich.) Union Schools. He writes reviews for School Library Journal and blogs about children's books at 100 Scope Notes (100scopenotes.com). He was a member of the 2010-2011 ALSC Children & Technology Committee, which included chair Amber Lea Creger, Kelley L. Beeson, Jill A. Bickford, Gretchen Caserotti, Juanita Toyetta Fisher, Patricia A. Havrin, Patty Saidenberg, Jeannie Chen, and Joella Peterson.

your ear about the frustrating digital rights management (DRM) software that makes it impossible to read certain e-books on certain devices. Adding complexity, all of the major e-book players have apps for reading their content on other devices. For example, you can download the Kindle App on your iPad and read books purchased from the Kindle Store.

Web-based options also continue to pop up. TumbleBooks offers a variety of current picture book titles for subscribers. Some publishers, such as Sylvan Dell and Capstone, are also entering the field, creating “in house” subscription eReader services.

Also joining the web-based crowd are library resource companies, which sell e-books and provide an online environment to read them (such as Follett Shelf from Follett Library Resources). Another noteworthy (and free) resource for digital picture books is the International Children’s Digital Library (ICDL). This website contains hundreds of e-books in various languages that users can read online for free. While it lacks the wide selection of popular titles, the ICDL is a nice option for institutions in the midst of belt-tightening.

Q: Who makes them?

Most major publishers hire outside developers to create their picture book e-books and apps (such as Random House’s work with Oceanhouse Media to adapt its Dr. Seuss titles). Occasionally a publisher will develop its own e-books or, in the case of HarperCollins and Curious Puppy, create a new digital division for the task.

The list of companies specializing in digital books is growing by leaps and bounds, with names like Atomic Antelope, Loud Crow Interactive, Minedition, Monster Costume, Ruckus Mobile Media, and Winged Chariot Press.

Q: Who reviews them?

When we discuss who is reviewing digital picture books, the real question is who

is reviewing picture book apps? E-books are a fairly close reproduction of the printed page, so librarians often rely on standard journal reviews to know which titles are worth their time.

Picture book apps, however, add so many bells and whistles that even a classic like *Green Eggs and Ham* deserves a separate app review. If you’re looking for recommendations, *Kirkus Reviews* leads the charge. It is the first of the traditional journals (*School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, and *The Horn Book* among them) to review picture book apps in an “official” way, giving stars to the standouts.

Kirkus is also creating a Children’s App Discovery Engine to help select apps that fit young readers’ needs.³ *Publishers Weekly* features a regular column titled “The Week in Apps,” providing a sample of the latest titles.⁴

School Library Journal has organized an “apps advisory group” with some leading library minds—I expect this will lead to more formal app recommendations in the future.

Q: Where can you get them? What’s available?

The number of picture book titles being published for the first time or converted into digital form continues to grow, and they are available from a number of outlets. Amazon’s Kindle Store and Barnes and Noble’s Nook Kids Store (available on the companies’ respective websites) are very similar in price and selection. Both stores include classics (like P. D. Eastman’s *Are You My Mother?*) and popular new titles (like *Fancy Nancy*, *Skippyjon Jones*).

Nook prices are set at \$12.99 and under, while Kindle e-books list around \$10 or less. Apple’s App Store serves up picture book apps, while its iBooks store is a source for e-books. An interesting development in the last year has been the Google eBookstore. Readable on

most devices (except the Kindle) Google e-books are priced at \$10.99 and under.

Q: What’s the impact for libraries?

Public and school libraries are dipping their toes into the digital book waters, but so far mostly for teens and adults. Public libraries, through partnerships with companies like Overdrive Media, are lending e-books to patrons who already own e-readers.

In schools, Kindle lending programs have been springing up, but picture book-friendly devices haven’t made the same sort of significant library inroads.⁵

But there are librarians eager to lead the way into this uncharted territory. Many early adopters are going the web-based route, projecting digital picture books on a large scale, adding animations, sounds, and narrations to the traditional story-time. This sort of multimedia experience is an engaging first step into what promises to be a wild new world. ☺

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Major Board Actions

Electronic Actions

APPROVED, the following recommendations from O&B regarding the merge of the (Andrew) Carnegie Medal Committee and Notable Children's Videos Committee:

Name: (Andrew) Carnegie Medal/Notable Children's Videos Committee

Function Statement: To select, annotate, and present for publication annually a list of notable videos of interest to children, available for use in homes and libraries, produced in the two calendar years prior to the date of their selection. Additionally, the committee will select the most distinguished American video for children, in accordance with the terms, definitions, and criteria governing the Carnegie Medal Award.

Composition: Chair, plus eight (May 2011)

2011 Annual Conference Actions

Board documents are posted on ALA Connect (<http://connect.ala.org>) and provide complete details about the issues listed below. Go to the ALSC section of ALA Connect and click on "Online Docs." Board documents are usually posted about two weeks prior to conference.

During the 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans, the Board voted to take the following action:

APPROVED, a memorial resolution honoring Virginia Mathews.

APPROVED, the "Resolution on Out of School Library Programs," and asked ALSC Councilor Rhonda Puntney to vote for it.

REFERRED, the Caldecott 75th Anniversary Action Plan to the ALSC Budget Committee to develop a budget for the 75th Caldecott Award anniversary celebration.

APPROVED, in concept, a mentoring program as ALSC's theme for the 2011-2012 ALA Emerging Leader program.

APPROVED, the Every Child Ready to Read Task Force recommendations.

APPROVED, the use of Twitter to stimulate dialogue amongst ALSC membership regarding issues related to digital media.

ADOPTED, the ALSC Strategic Plan, 2012-2017.

APPROVED, a new committee name: Great Websites Committee (formerly Great Web sites Committee).

APPROVED, the cycle of the "New to ALSC" director position to begin with the 2013 Nominating Committee. This committee will recommend language for Bylaw X, Sec. 2. In addition, the committee will capture the intent of the "New to ALSC" director position for future Nominating Committees to use when selecting candidates for the position.

APPROVED, the consent agenda, as amended, for 2011 ALA Annual Conference.

DIRECTED, the ALSC President to work with the YALSA President to establish an interdivisional Odyssey Award Manual Task Force that will work between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012.

ACCEPTED, the Memorandum of Understanding between ALSC and REFORMA regarding the Pura Belpré Award.

APPROVED, the Policies for Service on Award Committees, Media Evaluation Committees, and Wilder Award Committee.

ACCEPTED, a plan to recognize ALSC members with 25 years of service with a letter from the president, ribbons available at conferences, and annual recognition at the Membership Meeting and in the ALSC newsletter.

REJECTED, all of Recommendation #1 in the Banquet Pricing Task Force Report, and asked ALSC staff to explore other opportunities to promote honor winners.

APPROVED, the appointment of a steering committee to oversee the Caldecott Award 75th anniversary celebration.

ACCEPTED, the following recommendations of the Caldecott Award 75th Anniversary Task Force: provide a series of webinars, including one free webinar; create a photo gallery to live online; offer a program at the 2012 ALSC Institute; dedicate an issue of *Children and*

Libraries to the 75th Anniversary celebration; investigate the feasibility of video streaming the 2013 Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet; extend social media opportunities and any other no-cost ideas generated by the Caldecott Award 75th Anniversary Celebration Steering Committee.

ACCEPTED, the 2012 Annual Conference program schedule as presented.

APPROVED, the 2012 preliminary proposed budget presented by the Budget Committee, including the following additional recommendations: defer use of the Carole D. Fiore Endowment until the fund generates \$1,000 annually (minus bank fees); use the Children's Library Services Endowment funds for the Great Websites for Kids redesign; and initiate a membership dues review.

New from ALSC/ALA

ALSC is pleased to announce these new products available through the ALA Store at www.alastore.ala.org.

- The *Newbery Caldecott Mock Elections Tool Kit*, revised by Steven Engelfried, Wilsonville (Ore.) Public Library, delivers everything a planner needs to plan and execute a successful and engaging mock election, including planning guidelines, award criteria, tips for rewarding mock discussions, ideas for follow-up activities, and much more. As a digital download, the new tool kit also provides Word, PDF, and Excel files of audience handouts, evaluation forms, certificates, and voting ballots that can be easily customized. We have even included lists of suggested book titles for thematic elections focusing on a genre, such as biography, mystery, and historical fiction. Plus, ample full color images from past Caldecott winners demonstrate various artistic media and elements employed by children's book artists.
- The *Every Child Ready to Read, Second Edition Kit*, from ALSC and the Public Library Association (PLA), continues to focus on parent and caregiver education as well as on community partnerships and outreach efforts, and provides several key enhancements, including more workshops (eight), fluid talking points rather than scripts, and customizable PowerPoint templates. Complete contents include: manual; CD with PowerPoint presentations and resources for eight workshops; bookmarks (100); brochures (100); and poster (one). Bookmarks, brochures, and posters are also sold separately.
- *In the Words of the Winners: The Newbery and Caldecott Medals, 2001-2010*, by ALSC and The Horn Book, is an exclusive collection of acceptance speeches from the prestigious award winners of the past ten years. Each speech is accompanied by the *Horn Book* review of the winning title and a biographical profile of its celebrated creator. Three insightful introductory essays examine changes in youth publishing during the last decade, rounding out this engaging glimpse at the writers and artists whose work informs the direction of children's literature.
- *El día de los niños/El día de los libros: Building a Culture of Literacy in Your Community through Día*, by Jeanette Larson for the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), offers a collection of the best Día programming ideas, including ready-to-use programs, easily adaptable for a variety of cultures; bilingual book suggestions; cultural competency training tips to encourage outreach to minority populations; and interviews with library directors on how to heighten awareness of cultural and literacy issues.
- *The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books, 2011 Edition* covers the most distinguished American children's literature and illustration. Librarians and teachers everywhere have come to rely on this annual guide for quick reference, collection and curriculum development, and readers' advisory. In this year's essay, Barbara Kiefer, professor of children's literature at Ohio State University, explores the past, present, and future of picture books, from prehistoric cave paintings, to post-modern picture books of the late-twentieth century.

Wanted! Award Applications

ALSC is seeking nominations and applications for its professional grants and awards.

- **Bechtel Fellowship.** Librarians working in direct service to children, or retired members who completed their careers in direct service to children, for a minimum of eight years, are encouraged to apply for a Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship to finance a month of study at the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The \$4,000 fellowship is for travel and living expenses during the period of study. A mentor will be assigned upon request.
- **Bookapalooza.** This program offers three select libraries a collection of materials, including books, videos, audiobooks, and recordings. The materials are primarily for children aged birth through fourteen and have been submitted to ALSC award selection and media evaluation committees for award and notables consideration.
- **ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Program Grant.** This \$3,000 grant is designed to encourage outstanding summer reading program development by providing funding to implement such a program. The applicant must plan and present an outline for a theme-based summer reading program in a public library. The committee encourages proposals with innovative ways to encourage involvement of children with physical or mental disabilities.
- **The Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved Grant,** sponsored by Candlewick Press, provides one library with \$3,000 to fund outreach programs for underserved populations. The award is in honor of author Kate DiCamillo and the themes represented in her books.

- **Distinguished Service Award.** ALSC members are invited to nominate one of their fellow members for the Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on library services to children. Nominees may be practicing librarians in a public or school library, a library or information science educator, a member of the library press, or an editor or other employee of a publishing house. The individual may be active or retired. The recipient receives \$1,000 and an engraved pin.
- **Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award.** Established with funding from Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, this award pays the honorarium and travel for a visiting author/illustrator up to \$4,000. Hayes Award applicants seek to provide a visit from an author/illustrator who will speak to children who have not had the opportunity to hear a nationally known author/illustrator.
- **Penguin Young Readers Group Award.** This \$600 award is presented to up to four children's librarians to enable them to attend the ALA Annual Conference for the first time. The 2012 Annual Conference will be held in Anaheim, California. The recipients must be ALSC members, work directly with children, and have less than ten years, but more than one year, of experience as a children's librarian by the opening of the Annual Conference.

For more information about each award and to download award applications, visit the ALSC website at www.ala.org/alsc and click on Awards & Grants—Professional Awards. To request a form by e-mail, send a request to alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 1, 2011**.

Suggestions Welcome

ALSC members are encouraged to suggest titles for the 2012 book and media awards. Send recommendations with full bibliographic information to the award committee chair.

- The **Newbery Medal** is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. **Viki Ash**, Viki.ash@sanantoniogov.org.
- The **Caldecott Medal** is given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. **Steve Herb**, slh18@psu.edu.
- The **Mildred L. Batchelder Award** is a citation given to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. **Susan Stan**, stan1sm@cmich.edu.
- The **Arbuthnot Lecture** features a speaker who is an individual of distinction in the field of children's literature. Send recommendations for lecturers for the 2013 lecture to **Susan Pine**, spiney48@verizon.net.
- The **Pura Belpré Award**, co-sponsored by ALSC and REFORMA, is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. **Daisy Gutierrez**, daisy.gutierrez@houstontx.gov.
- The **Andrew Carnegie Medal**, supported by an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, honors an outstanding video production for children. **Martha Simpson**, msimpsonmls@comcast.net.
- The **Geisel Medal** is given to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books. **Carole Fiore**, Carole@Fiore-tlc.biz.
- The **ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production** is given to the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States. **Lizette Hannegan**, lizhannegan@mac.com.
- The **Sibert Medal**, sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, and named in honor of the company's long-time president Robert F. Sibert, is given to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished informational book for children. **Andrew Medlar**, amedlar@chipublib.org.

We also welcome suggestions for the Notable Children's Media lists. Send titles with full bibliographic information to the committee chair.

- Notable Children's Books, **Kathleen Isaacs**, kisaacs@mindspring.com.
- Notable Children's Recordings, **Sharon Haupt**, shaupt@charter.net.
- Notable Children's Videos, **Martha Simpson**, msimpsonmls@comcast.net.

2011 Election Results

Spring election results were announced on April 29. Dr. Carolyn S. Brodie, professor, Kent (Ohio) State University, School of Library and Information Science, was elected ALSC vice president/president-elect.

Dr. Brodie received her Ph.D. in Library and Information Science in 1988 from Texas Woman's University, Denton, and has been an ALSC member for 22 years. She has been a member of several ALSC committees, including the Newbery (2000 Chair) and Caldecott, among others. From 2006-2009, she was an ALA councilor-at-large and served as Ohio's ALA chapter councilor from 1996-2004.

Three ALSC Board of Directors also were elected: Ernie Cox, Iowa City, Iowa; Lisa Von Drasek, Bank Street College of Education, New York; and Jan Watkins, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library.

The newly elected vice president and board members were seated to the Board at the close of the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

The following individuals were elected to serve on the 2013 Newbery, Caldecott, and Sibert Committees:

- **2013 Newbery:** Virginia Collier, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, Roswell, Ga.; Amber Creger, Woodson Regional Library/Chicago Public Library; Roxanne Feldman, The Dalton School, New York; Jos Holman, Tippecanoe County Public Library, Lafayette, Ind.; Caroline Kienzle, Seminole, Fla.; Amy McClure, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio; Elizabeth Moreau, Mountain View Branch Library, Anchorage, Alaska; and Marilyn Taniguchi, Beverly Hills (Calif.) Public Library.
- **2013 Caldecott:** Elise DeGuseppi, Pierce County Library, Tacoma,

Wash.; Nancy Johnson, Singapore American School, Singapore; JoAnn Jonas, San Diego County Library; Miriam Martinez, University of Texas, San Antonio; Kiera Parrott, Darien (Conn.) Library; Carol Sibley, Minnesota State Library, Moorhead; Maida Lin Wong, South Pasadena (Calif.) Public Library; and Nancy Zimmerman, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

- **2013 Sibert:** Martha Baden, Alice Boucher World Languages Academy, Lafayette, La.; Linda Ernst, King County Library System, Bellevue, Wash.; Carol Goldman, Queens Library, Jamaica, N.Y.; Toby Rajput, National-Louis University, Skokie, Ill.; and Dean Schneider, Ensworth School, Nashville, Tenn.

Three proposed ALSC Bylaw changes that also appeared on the spring ballot were approved. For details about the changes, visit www.ala.org/alsc.

Julie Corsaro, immediate past president, appointed the following award committee chairs: Steven Engelfried, Wilsonville (Ore.) Public Library, 2013 Newbery Award Committee chair; Sandy Imdieke, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Mich., 2013 Caldecott Award Committee chair; and Kathie Meizner, Montgomery County Public Libraries, Silver Spring, Md., 2013 Sibert Award Committee chair. Mary Fellows, current ALSC president is appointing the remaining members of these three committees this fall. ☺

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THE LAST WORD

Why Children's Librarians Matter Now More than Ever

Kevin Roth

As an eleven-year-old, I never would have guessed that my elementary school librarian (at Lambert Elementary School in Overbrook Park, Pa.), Sandy Pomerantz, would end up influencing my music career. Hunched over her guitar, we sat in a circle on the library floor listening to her sing folk songs and read stories. She loved to sing and to perform, and her enthusiasm was contagious.

Sandy noticed my musical gifts early on—as I plunked away on the piano and brought her my favorite Peter, Paul, and Mary records. One day, she introduced me to a friend of hers, who took me to meet a dulcimer player. I was thirteen. I fell in love with its sound, and taught myself to play, and at the tender age of sixteen, I had my first record deal with Folkways Records.

Now, thirty-seven years later, with more than ten ALA awards for my children's records and a new line of children's books, I perform in concert halls, theaters, and—yes—libraries nationwide, hunched over my dulcimer, singing folk songs and reading original stories, just like my inspirational librarian from long ago.

I believe in this age of high-speed connections and tweets that give me the twitters that singing live and telling a great story face-to-face in a library filled with brilliance is the antidote to a fast-paced world. There is nothing like hearing someone sing live or holding a book in your hands, smelling the paper and admir-



ing the jacket cover. I am all for downloads, but nothing beats the human experience.

Throughout my career, Sandy would keep in touch: "Why haven't you called me? Are you *too famous* for me now?"

I remember her telling me time and again, "You are my success." Truth be told, I very well may be, but she was an even greater success.

She never sought fame or fortune, never got to sing on a hit PBS show, record with her musical heroes, or accomplish any of the numerous things I was blessed with. Her success was simpler and more humble—perhaps greater.

We remained friends for nearly thirty years until she died of cancer several years ago. But I'll always remember my elementary school days, with Sandy hunched over her guitar, singing silly songs, reading stories, and doing all the great and important things librarians do. She was a modern-day mystic in my eyes—a keeper of a lost art.

Here's to great librarians, great music, and great books being introduced to small children in tiny circles on library floors, and to you, Sandy Pomerantz. Bravo! The angels, I'm sure, are gathered for "storytime with Sandy" every day.

Kevin Roth, an award-winning musician and author of the Tales of Wabby Wabbit books and CDs, performs at libraries nationwide. You can visit him at www.myquiettimes.com.

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.