

Children's Book Insider

July 2019

HOW TO WRITE AN ACTION SCENE



**JULY'S EXCLUSIVE ABOVE THE
SLUSHPILE SUBMISSIONS CODE**



cameron kids

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Lynne Marie is the author of *Hedgehog Goes to Kindergarten* and *Hedgehog’s 100th Day of School* (Scholastic), *The Star in the Christmas Play* and *Let’s Eat Around the World* (Beaming Books), *Moldilocks* and the *3 Scares* (Sterling) and more forthcoming, as well as numerous stories and articles in magazines, including *Highlights for Children*, *High Five*, *Baby Bug*, *Family Fun*, *Hopscotch*, *Turtle*, *Spider* and *Writer’s Digest*. Her website is <http://www.LiterallyLynneMarie.com>

Jane McBride is the author of 36 novels, numerous short stories and articles including pieces in 16 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* anthologies, and the CBI Managing Editor. Follow her writing blog at <http://www.janemchoate.blogspot.com>

PJ McIlvaine is a jill of all trades when it comes to writing: kid lit, screenwriter, journalist, blogger. She is the author of *Little Lena and the Big Table* (Big Belly Book Co., May 2019) and *Dragon Roar* (MacLaren-Chchrane, TBD). PJ is also a co-host of #PBPitch, the premiere Twitter pitch party for picture book writers and illustrators. Follow PJ’s magical adventures at her website <https://pjmawriter.com>

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Children’s Book Insider makes every effort to verify the legitimacy of small and new presses and literary agents before printing information in “At Presstime.” However, authors and illustrators should always proceed with caution when approaching publishers or agents with whom they are unfamiliar, and read contracts carefully. All “At Presstime” listings are current at the time of initial publication. Members are urged to verify listings past the month of publication.

At Presstime:

Agent Accepting Middle Grade/Young Adult Submissions

Kat Enright (she/they) is an Associate Agent at the Seymour Agency (<https://www.theseymouragency.com>), representing middle grade and young adult/adult fiction. Kat is especially interested in elevating voices of marginalized authors. Kat seeks stories that represent the diversity of the world we live in (including, but not limited to, all ethnicities, sexual orientations, mental and physical health, and socioeconomic statuses).

Kat is looking for fresh, new stories, and actively seeking MG and YA of all genres. Middle grade interests include unique voices that blend whimsy and magic, and science fiction/fantasy as well as contemporary fiction that explores the world through an authentic, diverse lens. For contemporary YA, seeks dark tales with compelling protagonists. Especially drawn to found-family stories and stories that emphasize and explore female friendship, and stories that highlight what it is like to grow up outside of the typical white, straight, affluent experience. Historical YA is also an interest, particularly manuscripts that explore what queer people and people of color were doing in that time. Young adult science fiction/fantasy should include vibrant worlds that draw from traditionally underrepresented cultures and fresh takes on common tropes. Not interested in nonfiction, sports stories, dystopia, Westerns, sweet YA, or portal fantasies. Send a query letter, synopsis and the first 10 pages of the manuscript through Query Manager at <https://querymanager.com/query/KatEnright>

Middle Grade Historical Fiction Contest

The Institute of Children's Literature is holding a contest for unpublished middle grade historical fiction manuscripts. Entries should be historical fiction (any time period) aimed at readers ages 10-14 (grades 5-8). Submit 750 words from any part of the novel. Submissions will be judged on clarity, originality, potential in the market, appropriateness for the age range, and your ability to match standard manuscript format (double spacing, clear contact information, no creative use of fonts). The winning entries will be announced at a live online workshop within 90 days after the contest closes. All contest entrants will be notified of the event details by email and be invited free of charge. (Non-entrants may attend for a nominal fee of \$7.) Three cash prizes will be awarded: 1st prize: \$1,000; 2nd prize: \$200; 3rd prize: \$100.

Submit online at <https://instituteforwriters.lpages.co/icl-middle-grade-historical-fiction-contest/> There is a \$19 entry fee per entry (you may submit more than one manuscript, but each submission requires a separate entry fee), payable electronically on the submission form. All entries must be received by midnight on August 31, 2019.

Agent Seeks Picture Books from Author-Illustrators and Graphic Novels

Anna Olswanger has been a literary agent since 2005. She started her career at Liza Dawson Associates in Manhattan, and in 2014 launched her own literary agency, Olswanger Literary LLC (<https://www.olswanger.com>). Anna enjoys discovering new authors and illustrators, and is looking for "voice," the sound and rhythm of an author that is hers alone.

At this time, Anna is only seeking picture book submissions from author-illustrators, and graphic novels (texts from authors only, or text and illustrations from author-illustrators). She works hard with authors to get their manuscripts into shape for submission and will go through several revisions with clients before submitting to editors. Anna has developed a special interest in animal advocacy. She is the agent for Jill Robinson and Marc Bekoff's *Jasper's Story: Saving Moonbears*, the story of a moon bear held captive in a cage by bear farmers in rural China until rescued by Animals Asia, the organization that Jill founded, and Alan Rabinowitz's *A Boy and a Jaguar*, the story of a boy who fulfills his promise to speak for animals who cannot speak for themselves. Anna is also interested in finding unusual books with a Judaic or Israel theme. She is the agent for Ruchama Feuerman's novel *In the Courtyard of the Kabbalist*, about the friendship between a rabbi's assistant and a devout Muslim janitor, and Santiago Cohen's picture book *The Yiddish Fish*, about a fish who speaks Yiddish. Start by sending an email to anna@olswangerliterary.com with a few details about your book and the opening pages in the body of the email (not in an attachment). Author-illustrators can include a link to their online portfolio or sample art that goes with the manuscript. If Anna likes what she reads in your query, she'll ask to see the full manuscript. You can find out more about Anna's clients on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AnnaOlswanger>

Magazine for Ages 2-6 Seeks Submissions

Humpty Dumpty is an award-winning magazine for children ages 2-6. It promotes the healthy physical, educational, and creative growth of young children through interactive activities and stories. Reviewing recent issues will acquaint writers with the magazine's tone and with what has already been published. Sample copy requests can be made by writing to U.S. Kids, PO Box 88928, Indianapolis, IN 46208 or emailing editors@uskidsmags.com. Back issues can also be found in many libraries.

Currently seeking submissions in the following categories: **fiction** (Short stories 450 words or less. Payment: \$30 and up); **Build-A-Book** (Mini-stories of 70-125 words. These should be positive and light-hearted; often humorous. Characters can be children or animals. Welcomes material that deals with kindness, love, good manners, friendship, holidays, and seasons); **poetry** (4-12 line poems. Please remember the age of your audience. Payment: \$25 and up); and **crafts** (Fun crafts of 250 words or less that young children can make with a bit of adult help. Crafts can celebrate holidays or seasons. Materials should be inexpensive and easy to obtain. Include easy-to-understand steps and directions and, if possible, include a photo of the finished craft. Payment: \$40 and up).

Writers should present their material in a way that is appropriate for kids and does not talk down to them. Stories should appeal to a broad audience of girls and boys located across the United States and beyond. If you are writing a story, but have not been around kids in awhile, please make sure your dialogue and characters are up to date. Seasonal material should be sent at least 8 months in advance. Submit the entire manuscript either by mail (send to Submission Editor, U.S. Kids, *Humpty Dumpty Magazine*, P.O. Box 88928, Indianapolis, IN 46208 and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want materials returned), or paste the manuscript into the body of an email and send to humptydumpty@uskidsmags.com. Please note if it is a simultaneous submission. Allow up to 3 months for a response.

Sydney Taylor Manuscript Competition

The Association of Jewish Libraries sponsors the annual Sydney Taylor Manuscript Competition. A cash award of \$1,000 will be given for the best fiction manuscript appropriate for readers ages 8-13, written by an unpublished author. Unpublished is defined as not having published any works of fiction (commercially or self-published) for young readers. The book must be a work of fiction in English with universal appeal of Jewish content for readers aged 8-13 years, both Jewish and non-Jewish. It should reveal positive aspects of Jewish life.

Each entrant may submit one manuscript (64-200 pages) not currently under consideration by a publisher or another competition. Material should be a literary work of fiction in English. The story should serve to deepen the understanding of Judaism for all children. Short stories, plays, poetry, or collections of short stories are not eligible. Manuscripts should be submitted in PDF format by uploading through the AJL website, or on a CD mailed to the Competition's coordinator. Hard copies of the manuscript will not be accepted.

To assure impartiality, the manuscript **MUST NOT** include the author's NAME on it anywhere. **DO** include the TITLE at the top of every page of the manuscript. Each entrant will submit a cover letter and a curriculum vitae. The cover letter should include a short personal statement and a summary of the manuscript. Combine your cover letter and curriculum vitae into a single document and upload via the AJL website. **The deadline for submission of manuscripts is September 30.** Do not submit elsewhere until January 31, by which date the winner will be determined and all competitors notified.

For full rules and an application, go to https://jewishlibraries.org/content.php?page=STMA_Rules (The link to for the application where you upload your manuscript is at the bottom of the page.)

Update to June 2019 At Presstime Listing

Bearport Publishing, a curriculum-based nonfiction publisher, is in the process of moving their offices from New York to Minneapolis, and has decided to be closed to submissions during this time. We'll let you know when this changes.

Counting Down to 30: Part 3 You're Awesome!

by Laura Backes

Dear Reader:

This installment of my series of editorials counting down the 12 months to CBI's 30th anniversary, in which I reveal 12 industry truths I've learned in the time I've been involved in children's publishing, is short and sweet. And relax — there's no tough love this month, just the nice kind.

I once gave a writer friend of mine an Emergency Affirmation Button she could put on her desk. Whenever she needed an ego boost, she could press the button and hear "You're Awesome!" Yes, it was a cheesy gag gift, but I think it should be a staple in every writer's and illustrator's toolbox, tucked between the "show, don't tell" tips and the feedback from their critique partners.

And yet, I often meet yet-to-be-published authors and illustrators who don't think they're awesome. They apologize for their lack of experience by ducking their heads and mumbling, "I'm working on my first children's book." Or they list their other life credentials (what they do for a living, how many kids they have, where they volunteer, etc.) and then add, "Oh, and I'm playing around with an idea for a young adult novel," as if it's an embarrassing afterthought. If they are brave enough to call themselves a writer and someone asks, "What have you published?", they instantly backtrack with, "Nothing. I'm not really a writer yet," and then pretend they need to find the restroom.

If you're one of those people, stop it.

You and I both know that the *writing* part of the book (and the *illustrating* part, if you're an author-illustrator) can be the most challenging part of the process. It's the most time-consuming, it requires the most learning, it takes the greatest amount of perseverance. And you volunteer for this task because you *want* to. No one's forcing you to get up at dawn to squeeze out an hour of writing time before work, or to spend your hard-earned vacation days at writing conferences. No one's demanding that you analyze your most precious ideas and decide which ones are book-worthy and which ones aren't. No one ever said, "Hey, you know what would be fun? Let's all pour our hearts out in the form of written words and pictures and then hand our hearts over to other people to analyze and point out the flaws so we can rip everything apart and do it all over again. And we'll call it revision."

Writing and illustrating is not for wimps. It's time to own your strength.

You are here because you want to create books that change children's lives. You are here because you want to share your passion for a topic with young readers and ignite that same passion in them. You are here because you want to reach out to a troubled child or teen through the pages of your book and say, "You're not alone." You're here because you want to make kids laugh in a world that often makes them scared or sad. How many people do you know can honestly say they're spending their spare time doing something that important?

So, the next time you're at a social gathering and someone asks you what you do, look them in the eye and say with confidence, "I'm a children's book writer." When they respond with "That sounds fun" (and they will, but often with an air of *Isn't that a charming hobby. You must spend your days playing with imaginary bunnies.*), you can smile and politely deliver one of the following:

"It is fun. I'm knee-deep in my research right now, and have several interviews with experts lined up be-

fore I begin the outlining process.”

“It’s a blast. I’m on my fourth revision and I finally figured out how to weave the plot’s central dramatic question through all three acts of my story so that question is answered in a satisfying yet unexpected way in the book’s climax.”

“Fun doesn’t begin to cover it. It’s an amazingly creative process that involves creating two main characters whose stories are told in alternate chapters, each with a central conflict and a significant sub-plot. Their stories come together about halfway through the book and intertwine to the dramatic conclusion in which the characters save a life and also realize some important truths about racial inequality. I’m moving plot points around on index cards so I get everything just right before I begin my first draft. It’s for kids in middle school.”

“I’ve spent the last week incorporating my picture book’s subtext into the illustrations so I can trim even more words from my text because, as you know, children really love being able to spot that secondary storyline in the pictures. It makes them feel smarter than the protagonist and even the adult reading the words out loud, and the duality of one thing happening in the pictures while another opposing story is being told in the text really cracks them up. It’s a precise balance that needs to remain age-appropriate while still being entertaining for the adult reader.... Oh, sorry. Yes, it’s fun.”

Or simply:

“It is fun. In fact, it’s the most fun I’ve had in a long time. Thanks for asking.”

Even if you’re yet to be published, what you’re doing is important. It’s valid, it’s real, and it takes a lot of courage. It’s also creative, satisfying, and incredibly fun. If you write, you’re a writer. If you illustrate, you’re an illustrator. Don’t make excuses for what you still need to learn or want to accomplish. That will come. Step into the respect you deserve and be proud of wherever you are in your journey right now.

If you’ve come this far, if you’re actually *working on a manuscript*, you’re miles ahead of all the people who say, “I’ve often thought about writing a children’s book,” but never do it. Own your status as a writer or illustrator. And keep going. We’ve got your back.

Because we think you’re awesome.

Sincerely,

Laura Backes



CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

by Kimberly M. Hutmacher

Sometimes we find ourselves in a bit of a writing rut, and a good challenge is the way to help us find our way out. Throughout the year, various organized writing challenges are available to get us motivated and putting words on paper again.

Storystorm

The new year brings with it Storystorm. The goal of this challenge is to come up with thirty new picture book ideas in the month of January. Author Tara Lazar hosts this challenge on her blog. Each day of January brings a new post to help inspire new ideas. Those who participate and meet the goal are eligible to win various prizes. Prizes range from books to professional critiques.

Chapter Book Challenge

The month of March brings several challenge opportunities. Write the first draft of an early reader, chapter book, middle grade, or young adult novel with Becky Fife's Chapter Book Challenge. Interested writers can join the private Facebook group. This challenge also offers the potential to win prizes.

Reading For Research Month

Maybe instead of writing, you feel like you need to be reading more of the kinds of books you want to write. March is also the month for Carrie Charley Brown's Reading For Research Month (REFOREMO). Spend this month reading at least five mentor picture book texts per day. This challenge also has its own private Facebook group where inspirational posts are shared. Again, this challenge offers the opportunity to win prizes.

National Picture Book Writing Week

If you spent March reading, how about spending the first seven days of May writing seven new picture books? If this interests you, join Paula Yoo and her Na-

tional Picture Book Writing Week challenge (NAPI-BOWRIWEE). Yoo offers up inspirational posts by fellow authors and the opportunity to win prizes.

National Novel Writing Month

November brings National Novel Writing Month (NANOWRIMO). Write the entire first draft of a novel in one month.

12x12

Some of these organized challenges carry on over several months or even throughout the entire year. Julie Hedlund's 12x12 challenges participants to write and revise 12 picture books in 12 months. This challenge is open to all, but please note that there is a fee for membership in this group.

Sub Six

Maybe you've been great at writing, but need a kick in the pants to get work submitted to agents and editors. The Sub Six Facebook community challenges each other to make six submissions in six months. Each month brings fresh encouragement and more prize opportunities.

Poetry Challenges

What about opportunities for poets? Laura Purdie Salas offers a 15 Words or Less poetry challenge. Each Thursday Laura posts a photo on her blog and asks participants to write a poem using only 15 words or less on whatever the image brings to mind. It's a great way to get those poetry juices flowing. Poetry Friday is an opportunity for bloggers to share a bit of their own or a bit of someone else's poetry. Interviews and tips are also a usual part of the roundup. Oftentimes, the Poetry Friday host will challenge participants to write about a particular theme. Recent themes included National Women's Day and Climate Change.

*Challenge Accepted continued***Twitter Challenges**

There are monthly writing challenges on Twitter. Use the hashtags #JanWritingChallenge, #FebWritingChallenge, etc to find and join each month's challenge.

Challenging Yourself

So, what to do if it's June and you want to write a novel, or it's October, and you want to come up with 30 new picture book ideas in 30 days or write seven new picture books in seven days? Just do it! No matter the time of year, you can set our own self-imposed writing challenges. If you need camaraderie, ask if anyone in your critique group might want to join you. You can give each other encouragement, provide accountability, and if all of you meet your challenge goals, maybe you can celebrate with a nice dinner out.

You can also check out the monthly National Novel Writing Month Now What? Events; hour-long virtual "write-ins" and other activities with writing prompts that take place in the months outside of NANORIMO. Go to <https://www.nanowrimo.org/now-what> for details.

Whether we are working through an organized online writing challenge, participating in a local writing group challenge, or just working through a self-imposed writing challenge, we can pull ourselves out of a writing rut just by saying, "Challenge accepted!"

Storystorm

<https://taralazar.com/storystorm/>

Chapter Book Challenge

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/chapterbookchallenge/>

Reading For Research Month

<http://www.reforemo.com/>

National Picture Book Writing Week

<https://napibowriweek.com/about/>

National Novel Writing Month

<https://www.nanowrimo.org/>

12x12

<http://12x12challenge.com/>

Sub Six

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SubSix/>

15 Words or Less Poetry

<https://laurasalas.com/15-words-or-less-poems-guidelines/>

Poetry Friday

<https://www.nowaterriver.com/what-is-poetry-friday/>



AMY NOVESKY, Children's Editor

cameron kids

interview by Lynne Marie

Cameron Kids, the children's book imprint of Cameron Books (a boutique publishing house), publishes kids' books for all ages. They have a small and growing list of thoughtfully curated, acquired, and produced titles. With an emphasis on beauty, simplicity, and story, Cameron Kids is carrying on the company tradition of books that simply need to be books—for kids!

LYNNE MARIE: You have over 20 years experience making award-winning books as an editor and an author — which came first, being an editor or an author? Please share a little about your journey and how you came to Cameron Kids.

AMY NOVESKY: Writing came first. I've written since I was a kid, and then I studied and practiced the craft in college and graduate school, focusing on poetry and short fiction. I had a few poems and short stories published before I became an editor, first with Chronicle Books, and then as a freelance editor for many years, and that's when I started writing picture books. Now I mostly edit, but I am always writing, working on stories of my own, as well.

LM: Your list seems to currently be comprised of board books and picture books. What about middle grade and young adult novels? Nonfiction? Poetry? You seem to be open to children's books for all ages — is it that you just haven't found the right book in those areas yet? Or are you not accepting those at this time?

AN: Picture books are my/our sweet spot. And we do quite a lot of creative nonfiction/biography. But I am always open to poetry, fiction and straight nonfiction; it

just has to blow me away and feel like a good fit for our small list.

LM: Please share what you look for in a board book. What is important for writers to remember when writing/submitting board books to you?

AN: As with any book, I am looking for stories/concepts that matter, are meaningful, unique, and, since they are for babies, simple but compelling. We just acquired a board book that is both funny and irreverent. We don't do much in between.



LM: Please share what you look for in a picture book. What is important for writers to remember when writing/submitting picture books to you?

AN: Stories that matter, are meaningful. I want to feel something when I read it. Laugh or cry, hopefully both. I have grown incredibly picky about the books I acquire. There are too many mediocre/forgettable books in the world; I don't want to add to that. And each book is a lot of work and take a lot of energy. For us, it has to be a "hell yes" or it's a no.

LM: One of my favorite books that you have written was *Cloth Lullaby*. To give us an idea of how ideas appeal to you and grow, please share the story behind the story of how that book came to be.

AN: I had always been drawn to Louise Bourgeois as an artist, but I didn't relate to much of her artwork. I found it creepy, including her iconic spiders. But then I discovered her cloth work, which I loved and which I found to

Amy Novesky continued

be very beautiful and accessible. And I read about her life — she wrote a lot, which is a gift to a writer — and what her cloth work meant to her, and then it all made sense to me, the connection to spiders, her mother, everything. While the book took 10 years to make, the story only took a week to write, which is rare.

LM: Please share some of the awards that Cameron Kids Books has won. How does this work — does the publisher submit for awards, or the author? I'm certain inquiring minds would like to know as much as you can share about this process.

AN: A few of our books are Junior Library Guild selections; *Boats on the Bay* recently won a Golden Poppy from the NCIBA; *Ode to an Onion* recently won Best Book in Children's Literature in the Younger Readers category of the Northern California Book Awards, and was just shortlisted for the competitive Communication Arts Design Competition. We send each book to the awards — both traditional and non — that make sense, that we feel it is worthy of winning.

LM: Having won awards yourself, what do you think are some of the criteria that makes a book an award-winner? Do you feel that this is something that you can strive for, or one of those things that just happens naturally?

AN: With picture books, it's the whole package: the writing, the art, the design, the production, the physical object (its paper, binding, casewrap, etc). Everything has to work together to make one beautiful book. We always strive to make beautiful books, and if we win awards, that is great, but it's not the goal.

LM: What does your slush pile look like, percentage-wise? What would you like it to look like? What would you like to see more of? What would you like to see less of?

AN: We receive about 100 submissions a month, mostly picture books, which is a pretty manageable amount. That said, we can no longer respond to each submission as we used to; it's just too time-consuming. And so we only respond to those we think have potential, or, that we would like to acquire, which is the best email to write. I'd love to see more stories that are truly a fit for our list; most aren't. I'd love to see fewer traditional, narrative, character-driven stories — which is most stories — we just don't do a lot of that.

LM: Please share a slush pile success story for an upcoming book and tell us what drew you to that particular submission.

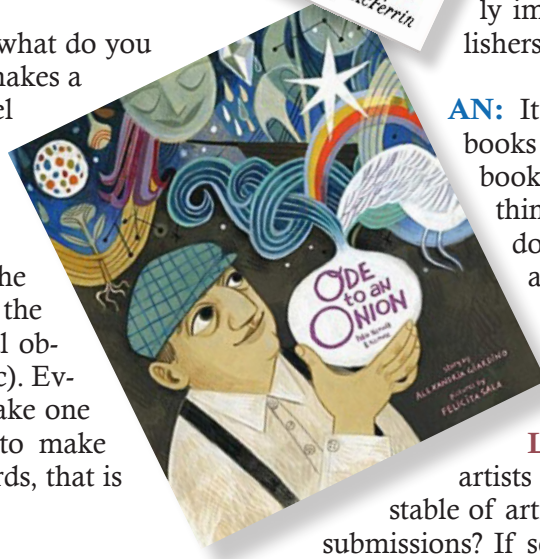
AN: *One Whole Bunch* by Mary Meyer came from the slush pile. We loved how simple and sweet it was: a counting book of flowers a boy gathers, starting with ten lavender, into one bouquet for his mother. Simple. Sweet.

LM: You've asked in your submission guidelines for authors to study your list — how important is it for them to also know what comp titles are out there in the universe? Is this especially important with smaller, boutique publishers?

AN: It is important to know what other books are out there that are similar to your book, especially with nonfiction. The first thing I ask, as an editor, is: has this been done already. And so, yes, I love when a writer can tell me in the cover letter that their book is the only book, or, there are a few other books, but this one is better because....

LM: How do you go about pairing artists with your authors? Do you have a stable of artists you work with, or do you accept submissions? If so, what are the particular guidelines for artists?

AN: We love to work with artists we've worked with before, but we are always looking for new artists. It's one of



Amy Novesky continued

the things I spend the most time on: finding just the right artist for each book. Many artists could do a good job, but we are looking for the person who is just right for the book, and, we know it when we see it. Sometimes that takes a long time. We often look in unusual places for artists, too, working often with fine artists who are new to illustration, for example. We accept submissions from artists in the same way that we accept submissions from authors: samples via email or a link to a portfolio. Some artists (and authors) send submissions by mail, which is fine, as long as an SASE is included if they want their materials returned. It's a lot of work to return submissions, and so we prefer to recycle them or receive them electronically.

LM: How open are you to new talent? Do you consider social media platforms? What do you want to see in a query?

AN: Yes, absolutely. And, as a small publisher, with smaller budgets than the big houses, we often rely on new authors and illustrators to round out our list. I personally am not big on social media, but we do follow artists on Instagram. For writers, the writing speaks for itself; it doesn't matter much to me how many followers you have on Facebook or Twitter.

LM: Cameron Kids debuted just three years ago and is growing. What future plans lie on the horizon at this point?

AN: We hope to continue to grow. We started at 1-2 books a year, and now we are at about 10, which is pretty ideal, given how much energy each book requires. We want and try to give our all to each book, and that's harder to do the more books you acquire. So, hopefully we will continue to grow at a rate that allows for a full, rich list, but that allows each of us to also remain attentive and present and inspired. That is super important to me.

LM: Cameron Kids Books are distributed by Abrams Books. Can you share with our readers just what that means as far as distribution and reach? Also what would a standard first run on a book be?

AN: We are so lucky to be a publishing partner with Abrams. It means we can stay true to who we are and make the books we believe in, and we have this big beautiful established house behind us, supporting us. They help us to have farther reach than we normally would,

and they've allowed us to take risks we might not have been able to take. And, personally for me, Abrams is my publisher, too; they published *Me, Frida* and *Cloth Lullaby*, and I am deeply grateful to them, have loved working with them.



ABOVE THE SLUSHPILE

Amy Novesky has agreed to offer an **Above the Slushpile** submission opportunity for Children's Book Insider subscribers **through July 2019**. Put the code **CBI CK Summer Slush Pass** in the subject line and submit the entire manuscript for a picture book, or a query letter for longer fiction, pasted into the body of an email to amyn@cameronbooks.com. Please study the Cameron Kids list at <http://cameronbooks.com> before submitting and take a look at their guidelines at: <http://cameronbooks.com/submissioninfo/>. Please understand that due to their small size, Cameron Kids can only respond to manuscripts they are interested in. If you don't hear back within 12 weeks of submission, you can assume it's a pass.

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

by Jane McBride

"The devil is in the details." How often have we heard that? Like most clichés, it hangs around because it's true. Especially in writing.

Details don't make a story, but the lack of vivid details can break one. How do we rev up the details in a story without it seem like we're making a list?

Start by Gathering. Have you ever watched a child gather together the things he'll need to do a project or play a game? Say he's going to make a Mother's Day card. He'll need paper, crayons or markers, glue, maybe some glitter and stickers. He lays out these tools with the precision of a surgeon laying out his scalpel and forceps. What do you gather together when you start to write a story? Do you gather words? Do you outline? Somewhere in your gathering, you'll probably go for the details. If you're writing a story about a boy who longs to learn to free fall with a parachute, you'll need details of the language of jumping, the equipment, the training for the first jump, and even the vocabulary of a teenage boy and his friends. Make a list of words that you come up with. Draw lines between them as connections emerge. Can you connect words that seemingly have no direct connection?

After you gather your details, pick the best to use in your book. You're not going to shower the reader with every detail you find — a select group of carefully-chosen, specific descriptions draw a picture in the reader's mind of the entire object, person or experience you're describing.

Layering. Chances are you've eaten a seven-layer salad or a chocolate layer cake or some other layered food. It is not the individual layers that give the food its rich consistency and flavor but the combination of its layers. In a seven-layer salad, for example, there are lettuce, peas, grated cheese, mayonnaise, bacon bits, red onions, and other ingredients. Each one, alone would taste fairly

bland. What happens when they are layered, one on top of the other, is magic. Layering details is much the same. When we use a detail to describe something, we find that it grows richer when another detail is layered on top of it. A word of caution here: don't pile on details simply for the sake of adding more. Be selective in what details you use. If you are describing a teenage girl who is deemed the prettiest girl in the high school, choose those details that stand out. "Long blond hair" is fairly prosaic. Perhaps say her hair was the color of wheat. What detail could you add to that? What about "the color of wheat in autumn?" It's a subtle but telling detail, giving the richness and variation of her hair color.

Comparing. Who doesn't love a good simile or metaphor? Just a review here: A simile compares something to something dissimilar, usually using the words "like" or "as." He was as big as a bear. A metaphor states directly that something is something else. He was a bear of a man. Granted, these similes and metaphors I just used are clichés, something you want to avoid at all costs. What could be some fresh comparisons? What if you are writing a story about a three-year-old boy who is taking a walk with his grandpa? The little boy sees a bunch of weeds with wiry stragglers sticking out at odd angles. He might note: *The weeds looked like Grandpa's eyebrows, all bushy and thick and prickly.* A real-life example: My son, then four-years-old, stared at his grandfather's bifocals and said, "Grandpa, your glasses have little windshields on them." What a great comparison.

Mine your life, listen to your children and grandchildren and everyone else and find those nuggets that give vivid descriptions and insights. Shamelessly eavesdrop on conversations at the park, at the grocery store, at family reunions. Keep a small notebook with you or jot down snippets of conversations on your phone. Pay attention as you walk around your neighborhood. Could you use the pink azaleas that grow in profuse abundance in your

neighbor's yard to describe the look on your 16-year-old main character's face when she attempts to talk to the boy of her dreams? *I'm sure my cheeks were the same Barbie pink as Mrs. Nelson's azaleas.* Remember to keep the similes and metaphors age-appropriate. For instance, you probably wouldn't have a three-year-old compare his mother's very fair skin to fine English porcelain. But he might compare it to the milk on his morning cereal. A note here: don't go overboard with similes and metaphors. A little goes a long way. Know when to use one and when to leave well enough alone. Dig deep for unique comparisons. Keep digging until you've found the very best one for your story.

Contrasting. The cousin of comparing, contrasting brings details to life in vivid color. Contrasting uses the opposite technique, saying that something is not like the other, sometimes employing exaggeration or even hyperbole. In a book that I recently finished writing, I wanted to make the point of the difference between a blue-collar man and a genteel lady. I used the sentence *He was bathtub gin to her mint julep.* This gave a quick but telling insight into their respective upbringings, values, expectations, places in society, etc. What contrasting details can you bring to your work-in-progress? If your main character is a ten-year-old girl who doesn't feel welcome in her new foster home, how might she think of herself? "A duck out of water" is a tired cliché that should be put out of its misery. What would be fresh and new? How about *She was as welcome in her new family as fleas on a dog?* Notice that this example uses both contrast and simile together.

Senses. Few details add more to a story than sensory ones. Upon a character's introduction into a story, we (the readers) react to her through her senses. What does she see, hear, touch, feel, taste? How does she respond to each of these sensory impacts? If she is eating a spicy meal at a Thai restaurant, how do the flavors dance upon her tongue? If she is hearing the soft mewl of a kitten, does her heart melt or is she annoyed because the sound is interrupting her listening to the TV? If she is petting a new puppy, how does the feel of his silken fur interact with her fingers? You get the picture. Every time you invoke a sensory detail into your writing, you are making it that much more real. Of course you don't want to itemize these details like a grocery list. You want to sprinkle them throughout the story with a deft and knowing hand.

Precision. If you are describing a flower-lined walkway,

don't just say flowers. Name the particular flowers, such as petunias or zinnias or daisies. If you are naming the car that your 17-year-old character's parents gave him for his birthday, say "It was a beat-up VW that could have been showcased at the Museum of Ancient Transportation, right between the wheel chiseled from rock and the horse-drawn carriage."

Point of view. Any descriptions you use should be consistent with the tone and voice of your viewpoint character. If your first-person narrator has a sarcastic sense of humor, he'll tend to put a humorous, ironic or scoffing slant on the details he mentions in the narrative. If you're writing in the third person limited viewpoint about a nine-year-old girl who is an artist, she'll experience the world through color, shape and form. The details important to your main character also give a window into who that person is and how they see the world.

IN CONCLUSION

There are other ways to use details in your writing. Work with those techniques that suit your writing best. Always, always dig for the best of those details. Don't be satisfied with the first that come to mind. After all, this is your story and you want it to shine.

Michael Sussman

Follows His MUSE

interview by PJ McIlvaine

Finding your niche or brand can take a writer down many roads less traveled. For author Michael Sussman, his creative muse has led him on quite a journey with many a genre detour. With his latest picture book, *Duckworth, the Difficult Child* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, June 2019), in the proud tradition of the great Edward Gorey, Sussman was initially concerned that the material might be too scary for kids. Luckily for kids of all ages, a publisher thought otherwise. Also an abstract artist, Sussman lives in Cambridge, MA, but he's really in Tahiti in spirit.

PJ McIlvaine: You've had quite an eclectic writing career, for example, writing in a variety of genres (PB, MG, YA, adult fiction, and non-fiction). Did you plan it that way or is it that you simply followed your muse? Do you feel that you have a brand in offbeat material?

Michael Sussman: I definitely didn't plan it this way, as it works against building a fan base. But I'm enslaved to a capricious muse, who cares not a whit for commercial success. I also get bored easily and am always looking for a new challenge. And, yes, my brand appears to be quirky, unorthodox stories that scare off most agents and editors!

PM: Your latest picture book, *Duckworth, the Difficult Child*, sounds like a hoot, a mix of Monty Python and Edward Gorey. Where did the inspiration for a story about a kid who is swallowed by a snake come from? Are you afraid that some children might find it scary or too offbeat?

MS: One summer evening, while strolling toward Inman Square in Cambridge, the image took shape in my mind of a snake with a large bulge in its middle, the creature

having swallowed a child. I recalled a similar image from *The Little Prince*, but when I returned home, I discovered that the prince's drawing was of a boa digesting an elephant. (Although, the prince notes, grown-ups all thought it was a picture of a hat.) I worried that my concept might be too scary for a picture book, unless I made it a funny story. I decided to model it after one of my favorite books, *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, by Florence Parry Heide and Edward Gorey, in which a boy named Treehorn finds himself shrinking, which his parents are too oblivious to notice.



PM: How long does a first draft usually take? What is your revision process like? Was there a particular reason why on *Duckworth* you used several editors? The illustrations for the book are bold and striking. Did you have any input into that?

MS: For a picture book, my first draft might be completed in a couple of days. But then it can take months, or even years, to refine and polish the story. When writing a novel, I edit as I go along, so my first drafts tend to be quite polished.

I hire freelance editors to help with both developmental and line editing. It can be expensive, but can also make the difference between a good and a great manuscript. For *Duckworth*, I used one editor for developmental editing, another for line editing, and then worked with Emma Ledbetter once I'd sold the manuscript to Atheneum.

Júlia Sardà is a world-class illustrator, centered in Barcelona. Her *Duckworth* illustrations are phenomenal, better than I could have imagined in my wildest dreams. Emma shared the illustrations with me from the earliest sketches, and I was able to offer my feedback. For

Michael Sussman continued

instance, I felt that Júlia's portrayal of *Duckworth* made him look too old, and Emma agreed. Based on our feedback, Júlia devised a younger version of the character, which worked out perfectly.

PM: You're represented by an agent now. Was finding an agent a difficult or lengthy process? Did your agent have a strategy when it came to submitting? What was the initial reaction from editors and publishers?

MS: I sold my debut picture book, *Otto Grows Down*, myself. My first agent was new to the job and our communication was less than optimal, so we parted ways before she sold anything. Things have gone much smoother with my current agent, Stephanie Fretwell-Hill, of Red Fox Literary. If I recall correctly, the submission process took about 6-8 weeks. As is typically the case with my manuscripts, most editors liked my writing but found the story too quirky. I worked with Emma Ledbetter for two months on polishing the story. When Júlia signed on, she was already committed to about a year's worth of projects, so it will be a little over three years from offer to publication. (Some illustrators are booked for 2-3 years, so we were lucky!)

PM: Do you write on a daily basis or when the muse strikes? Are you in the outline camp? In writing, how do you keep your enthusiasm and focus on a book without getting waylaid by another idea?

MS: I tend to write when the muse strikes. Personally, I find outlines deadly. I like to make up the story as I go along, and want to be as surprised as the reader at what happens next. One drawback to this approach — which I call “writing from your subconscious” — is that I often have absolutely no idea how the story ends!

I struggle to come up with good ideas, but once I've got one, I can write day and night without distraction. Other

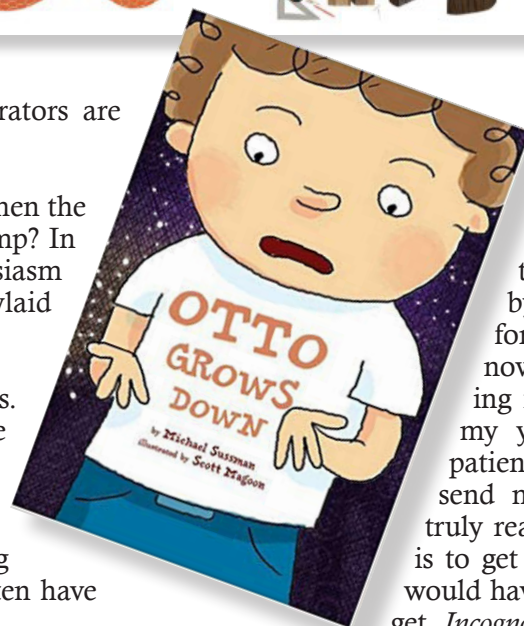
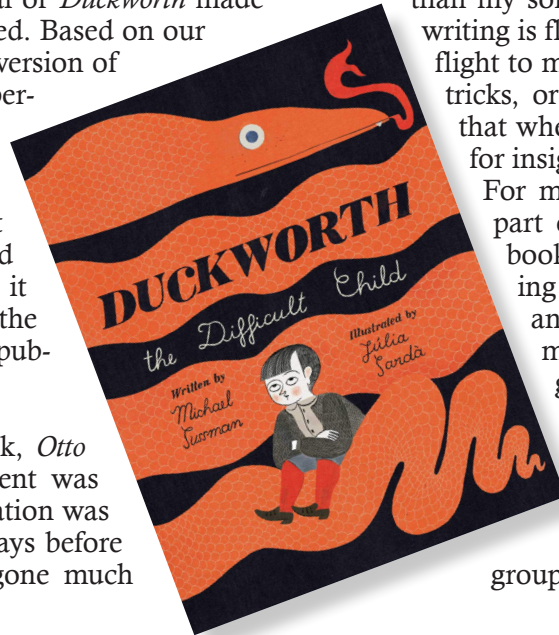
than my son, I live for those periods when my writing is flowing and the creative process gives flight to my imagination. I don't set goals, use tricks, or listen to music. My one crutch is that when I get stuck, I often use marijuana for insight into how to proceed.

For me, endings are perhaps the hardest part of writing a story. I read so many books that fail to provide a satisfying ending. Both with picture books and novels, I can struggle for weeks, months, or even years to produce a good ending. When I find it, the arc of the story feels complete, and the entire plot takes on deeper resonance.

I have belonged to many critique groups over the years, both online and in person. They were essential to my development as a writer. I also relied on critique partners, especially for picture books. One of my earliest partners was Tara Lazar, and I'm so proud of her success.

PM: Being a mature writer, have your writing goals changed over the years? What tips would you have given your younger self? Is there anything you would have done differently?

MS: I consider myself rather immature, despite my age. Which helps as a writer, I believe, since we need to remain in touch with our child-self. I began by writing nonfiction, two books for mental health professionals, but now I'm far more interested in writing fiction. As for tips, I'd have told my younger self to develop greater patience and a thicker skin, and to not send manuscripts out before they are truly ready. If I'd known how difficult it is to get a self-published novel noticed, I would have spent a bit more time trying to get *Incognolio* traditionally published. Despite rave reviews and enthusiastic tweets from Teller (of Penn & Teller), sales of the novel have been disappointing. Check it out — it's a page-turner



Michael Sussman continued

and unlike any novel you've ever read.

PM: What are you presently working on? Do you run ideas by your agent? Do you juggle multiple projects?

MS: I've just completed an MG novel, which is currently being subbed, as well as a sequel to *Duckworth*. I don't run ideas by my agent, but I might send her the opening chapters of a novel to see what she thinks. I tend to focus on one project at a time, and to work on abstract paintings with acrylics when not writing.

PM: On your website (<http://www.michaelsussman-books.com/books>) you have a section for your artwork. Have you thought about illustrating your own work?

MS: I would love to illustrate my own picture book, but I'd have to come up with a story that was a good fit for abstract art. In my teens and twenties, I did a lot of drawing. When I was 29, I contracted Guillain-Barre Syndrome, an autoimmune illness. It left me unable to draw a straight line, due to hand tremor. Only recently did it occur to me that I could still do abstract art and use masking tape for straight lines.

PM: What writers or books have been your greatest influence and why? What book do you wish you had written? If you could pick the brain of one writer, either dead or alive, who would it be?

MS: I wish I had written the *Alice* books and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Aside from Lewis Carroll and Mark Twain, the authors who have influenced my writing for children the most are Florence Parry Heide (*The Treehorn Trilogy*), Edward Gorey, Roald Dahl, Maurice Sendak, William Steig (*Spinky Sulks*), Norton Juster (*The Phantom Tollbooth*), David Small (*Imogene's Antlers*), and M.T. Anderson (*Feed*). These authors tend toward whimsical stories, clever premises, and dry or dark humor.

The authors who most influenced my novel, *Incognolio*, include Lewis Carroll, Tom Robbins (*Jitterbug Perfume*), Kurt Vonnegut, Italo Calvino (*Cosmicomics*), Paul Auster (*New York Trilogy*), Aimee Bender (*Willful Creatures*), Christopher Moore (*Island of the Sequined Love Nun*), and Kelly Link (*Pretty Monsters*). These authors tend toward quirky, unconventional fiction that is full of humor, suspense, and surprises.

PM: If you could gaze into a crystal ball from your Tahitian paradise, where do you see yourself five years from now?

MS: Although the fake bio I wrote for *Incognolio* places

me in Tahiti, I actually reside in Cambridge, MA. When my son, Ollie, graduates from Harvard in two years — assuming he leaves the area — I hope to move to a warmer climate. I see myself continuing to write fiction, hopefully for a wider readership.

WRITING COMPELLING ACTION SCENES

by Jane McBride

Having just finished writing several action scenes in my work-in-progress (WIP), I wondered if there were certain "rules" that made for exciting, un-put-downable action sequences. The question occurred to me because I wasn't totally happy with the scenes. One in particular seemed to fall flat. Though the characters were moving, their actions lacked impact and consequence. I don't ordinarily like rules and occasionally go out of my way to break them (in life and in writing), but I have found some guidelines that can help in writing action scenes.

But first, let's define what an action scene is. In movies, it's easy to pick out the action scenes: the car chase; the heroine charging up the stairs while the creepy guy in a mask trudges up behind her; the dog who jumps into the raging river to rescue a drowning child. All these scenes have one thing in common: adrenaline. Characters are reacting to the situation on instinct, not through calculated planning.

In books, not all action scenes have to be as over-the-top as a car chase, but they need that same adrenaline surge. Something happens that forces your character to react quickly and without much reflection. This "something" also advances the plot and gives the reader a bit more insight into the character's personality and ability to deal with problems. Let's take a look at some tips for writing action scenes in a Mini Blueprint format.

STEP 1: Establish the stakes of the scene.

ACTION: Action scenes are all about tension, and there's no tension if something isn't at stake. Start by asking yourself questions. What will happen if the character loses the fight, fails to find the treasure, or gets lost in a blizzard? Can you raise the stakes by throwing in unexpected obstacles into the scene? If your character charges up the stairs to get away from her stalker, thinking she'll crawl out through the third floor fire escape, what happens if the window to the fire escape is painted shut?

STEP 2: Make sure your action scenes focus more on action than description.

ACTION: Description slows down the pace of a scene and causes the viewpoint character to stop and notice his surroundings. Only include descriptions that enhance the action or match the tone of the scene. The same is true for sensory details. Your protagonist might feel the sting of glass cutting into her hand as she smashes the window, but she won't dwell on it. Instead of describing the feel of warm blood covering her palm, have it hinder her ability to hold onto the ladder as she descends the fire escape.

STEP 3: Stay in the present and let action scenes unfold in real time.

ACTION: Flashbacks can provide needed information for a story, but they usually don't belong in an action scene. Imagine your character swimming in a Louisiana bayou and an alligator suddenly appears. Will he spend time remembering seeing an alligator at a zoo when he was five and thinking that he was glad the alligator was on the other side of the enclosure? Probably not. He's going to be too busy running for his life. Later, he can remember the experience at the zoo and compare it to what just happened.

STEP 4: Leave out the touchy-feely things for right now. There will be time enough for them in the aftermath. I am a romance writer and love writing about feelings. But there is a time and a place for them.

ACTION: Concentrate on the action. If two 17-year-olds, boyfriend and girlfriend, are camping in the wilderness and are set upon by a bear, they probably aren't going to start confessing their feelings for each other. They're going to do everything they can to keep out of the bear's way and stay alive. When they have survived, they can tell each other how much they love each other. First things first! And survival almost always comes first.

Mini Blueprint continued

STEP 5: Figure out the setting. How does it impact the scene? (It should.) Does it aid or deter the main character's fight for survival?

ACTION: What if a nine-year-old boy and his family are fleeing from a flash flood that is threatening their home and town? Obviously the flood is threatening their survival. What does he do to help the family get through the ordeal? Can he use pieces of his environment (an old door that serves as a makeshift barge) to save his family?

STEP 6: Know who else is in the scene. Though some action scenes occur with only the main character present, many involve other people, such as villains, victims, etc.

ACTION: Determine what is the purpose of the scene. Is it to show character, as in a sixteen-year-old heroine who gets lost during a spelunking expedition and must find her way out of a series of caves on her own? Or is to show her relationship with others on the expedition as she assumes leadership when the whole group becomes lost?


STEP 7: Understand that action scenes are not only for mysteries or suspense novels. Even picture books can have action scenes, such as a ladybug sliding off a slippery leaf to fall in a puddle too deep for her to navigate.

ACTION: Review your WIP and determine which scenes need action. Are you writing a young adult novel where the 18-year-old heroine spends a lot of time (too much time?) thinking and moping? As she is trying to come to terms with the realities of life after graduating from high school, it is natural that she is caught up in her own thoughts and feelings and fears. But too much time spent doing this is boring. Readers want to know how she gets out of her funk and decides upon what to do next. Could you have a scene where she comes upon an accident and responds to a child trapped in a car seat with an unconscious mother in the driver's seat? Could your protagonist spring into action, get the child out of the car seat, call 911, and do whatever else is necessary until help arrives? Maybe this prompts her to think about a career as a paramedic or a firefighter. Maybe it takes her in a different direction and she considers entering school. My point is that even introspective novels need some action to help move the story forward.

Remember that the key words here are “action”, “tension” and “reaction”. Even a scene featuring a text conversation between two best friends can turn into an action scene if one character impulsively reacts to the

conversation, gets up and does something. If the reader understands the possible consequences of this character's reaction and sees that some of those consequences can get the character in trouble, you've got the elements of a tension-filled action scene. For example, two 13-year-old friends, Sam and Katie, are texting. Sam's saying how glad he is that his dad's away on a business trip because Dad's been drinking again. Suddenly, Sam texts that Dad has gotten home a day early, and he clearly stopped at the bar on the way home. Then Sam's texts stop. Katie has a bad feeling about this, grabs her mom's spare set of car keys and decides to drive over to Sam's house (no, Katie does not have a license). Katie's (and the reader's) adrenaline started pumping the moment she grabbed the keys and won't stop until she learns if Sam is safe.

Great action scenes have a tunnel-vision effect. They focus in on the heat of the moment, blocking out long passages of dialogue, unnecessary description, and any lengthy introspection or reasonable weighing of options the character may be prone to in calmer situations. An entire book written this way would be exhausting to read, but a few well-written action scenes, placed strategically at key moments in the plot, will keep the reader glued to the page.



Each month, we will be incorporating Mini Blueprints into CBI, which are based on the step-by-step way of learning in our full Writing Blueprints. If you're not familiar with our longer Writing Blueprints that take you through the process of writing, editing, submitting, marketing, or self-publishing your book, go to www.writingblueprints.com

Your Nonfiction Book's Origin Story

by Candice Ransom

When you've finished writing your nonfiction book, or even while you're still working on it, consider drafting an origin story. Nonfiction children's books are examined closely by everyone in the field: agents, prospective editors, acquiring editors, marketing and other industry professionals, interviewers.

An origin story adds polish to your nonfiction submission package: the manuscript, the back matter, your complete bibliography, and an essay on why you wrote the book.

What Is an Origin Story?

Your origin story answers the question, "Why did you write this book?" Trust me, someone will ask you what made you decide to write your book. You don't want to reply, "I wanted to write a nonfiction book for kids and found so-and-so's name on Wikipedia." Even if it's true, you should craft a better response.

The origin story is a short essay that explains how you came to your project. You spent months, maybe years, working on your project. As the author, you developed your vision of the material. Readers will pick up your passionate stance and be drawn into your story. But before that happens, share some of that passion in a personal essay.

Not a College Entrance Essay

Do not panic—you won't be graded on your origin story. The essay is a collection of your thoughts and unique experiences related to your book. During the long period of researching and writing, you might lose sight of how you became involved in the first place. Start by asking yourself simple questions:

- *What nugget of information sent you on your journey?*

- *Were you personally invested? If so, how?*
- *Did writing the book impact your life?*
- *Did your book surprise you by taking a different direction?*

Think about these questions, then draft an essay. Keep your tone conversational and direct. If your story took you to a new place, or struck a deep emotional chord, say so. As my dance instructor says, don't leave anything on the floor. If you can, match the style of your book: if your book is lyrical, write a lyrical essay. If it's humorous, be funny. Above all, be sincere. Agents and editors will appreciate your honesty.

How to Use Your Origin Story

Your essay can become part, or all, of your author's note. In the opening paragraph of the author's note in her picture book biography, *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*, Jen Bryant launches immediately into her origin story:

"Once, on a long drive across Pennsylvania, I found I'd packed an early edition of Roget's Thesaurus, mistaking it for the novel I planned to read. Resigned, I pored over the meticulously arranged entries, which were not organized alphabetically (like the more abridged modern versions I'd used), but instead by concepts and ideas. Somehow, the author had catalogued most every word in the English language by its meaning. Who was this man Roget? I wondered. And what compelled him to undertake this immensely difficult task?"

Bryant's unique origin story tells readers that not only do writers sometimes simply stumble onto a subject, but they become curious, ask themselves questions,

Origin Story continued

and are compelled to find the answers.

You'll be ready for interviews when your book comes out. The first question in Deborah Heiligman's *Cy-bils* blog interview, regarding her YA book *Vincent and Theo*, is "What drew you to the story of Vincent Van Gogh and his brother, Theo?" Heiligman admitted her inspiration came from touring the Van Gogh Museum on a trip to Amsterdam and reading a small plaque that described the importance of Theo in Vincent's life. "I knew that someday I would write about these brothers," she said.

Your origin story can be more involved. I'd never read any of Margaret Wise Brown's books until I was grown, except for *Home for a Bunny*, a Little Golden Book I got when I was five. The book was special because I didn't have a real home until then. When Leonard Marcus's *Awakened by the Moon*, the first adult biography of Margaret Wise Brown, came out, I kept the book on my nightstand, dipping into it every night for eight years. I studied Margaret's work seriously while earning my children's literature MA and MFA. My origin story for my picture book biography of Brown is the journey that began when I was five and ended when I wrote my version of her story years later.

After my book was acquired by Eerdmans, I sent my origin essay to the editor. When I met her last summer, she asked me to refresh her memory on how I came to write the book. I told her the story. You may find yourself on the spot, too. It helps to know your origin story well enough to recite as a compelling narrative.

The End is Only the Beginning

After writing your nonfiction manuscript, your work isn't over. There's the submission process and publicity after the book is published. Your origin story can help in those areas.

I shared the origin story of my latest manuscript with my agent. She will likely use parts of my story in her editorial submission letter.

An editor I recently met for lunch saw this manuscript. She asked the inevitable question: why I wrote the book. Over sandwiches, I narrated my origin story.

If she gets this manuscript to acquisition, she believes my origin story (I sent her a written copy) might carry some weight in the meeting.

Writing the essay will help you clarify your elevator pitch. Parts of your story will be useful in query letters and your book's back matter. You can share it on your website. And when your book is published, you'll have ready answers for interviews and social media promotion.

Finish your book. Then go back to the beginning and write a dazzling essay about it.