



**The Letterpress Project  
Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

# **An interview with Meg Rosoff**

**Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?**

I suspect I was a reader from birth. The earliest book I loved was *Go, Dog. Go!* by P.D. Eastman. I still love it and it still makes me laugh.

But the book that really shaped my small child's brain was *The Cat in The Hat*. I thought it was hilarious and totally identified with the Cat. He was my earliest anarchist hero. I've had a lot since then.

**Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?**

I became a writer at the age of 45 partly because I hated working in advertising so much. Hating my job without the courage to quit filled me with self-loathing, so in the end I figured I should at least try to write a book.

Then my sister died of cancer and I started imagining that my own funeral would be entirely pathetic, because everyone would say what a useless life I'd led because I'd never even tried to do what I wanted to do.

Other inspirations for writing were other people's terrible books — in the end, I thought, "I probably can't write a really brilliant book, but I can certainly do better than that..."

**Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?**

I'm looking for eternal truths even in picture books. You don't have to write a thousand pages to create a work full of resonance and wisdom. And if it makes me laugh, all the better.

**Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?**

I write for myself and hope what I write appeals to a few other people.

**Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?**

I've never been a fan of e-books. Mostly because I would never remember what I was reading if I didn't have a cover to look at every time I picked up a book. You can read junk food novels on an e-book, but an important book needs to be read in the flesh.

**Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?**

Like all other writers, I have far too many books. But I have no trouble at all getting rid of a book I don't love, or will never read.

I love taking books to the Oxfam shop. And while I'm there, I usually buy another three or four.

Sometimes I buy old books for the woodcuts or the beautiful covers. Any book I really loved, I'll buy whenever I see it second hand -- so I can give copies away to my friends. I read a novel recently that was so good, I bought seven copies and gave them all away.

If you're offering me a special book, I wouldn't say no to a First Folio of Shakespeare plays.

Thank you very much for taking time to do this for us. We will advise you when we publish it on the website - [www.letterpressproject.co.uk](http://www.letterpressproject.co.uk). Please return the completed interview to:

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