

The Letterpress Project

An Interview With Neal Zetter

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

Dad used to read to me at bedtime each night when I was wee and my favourites, both poetry books, were *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr Seuss and *The Train to Timbuctoo* by Margaret Wise Brown. I was very lucky as I loved poetry and each one contained just the one looooooong poem. Like eating a gigantic bar of your favourite chocolate!

Q2. What inspired you to become an author?

Those bedtime reading sessions and Mum taking me to my local library every fortnight to borrow six books. I was also fired by my, still present, love of DC and Marvel comics and song lyrics in the music I listened to as a teenager and beyond.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book?

My (and all) books have to 'speak to' their readers by using smart, imaginative language powerful enough to move an idea I am passionate about from my head into the reader's in an engaging and entertaining way.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books?

I usually aim my books at KS2 children/7-11 year olds then I find younger and older children buy them too. Although I write for teens and adults I don't produce books for those age groups as they rarely buy poetry books even though they enjoy the poems I perform aimed specifically at them.

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

I certainly hope not. Fortunately sales of children's physical books, and that includes children's poetry books, are absolutely booming and, although I have sold thousands of books, no child has ever asked me if my work is available as an e-book. This adult poem of mine more clearly expresses my thoughts on the matter: www.cccpworkshops.co.uk/poems/175-you-cant-cuddle-up-with-a-kindle

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

Although I am passionate about libraries I only buy books as I love to keep them. I get very involved with a book - they are my friends and you never want to lose a friend! I am also a collector of vintage superhero comics so an Action Comics #1 from 1938 (the first ever Superman/superhero comic) would be pretty cool. But as an issue recently sold in the USA for \$3,208,000 (yes, you read that figure correctly!) I think I am unlikely to get my hands on one.