



## **The Letterpress Project**

### **Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this series of Letterpress Project e-interviews that we are undertaking over the coming months. The Letterpress Project is a not-for-profit initiative that exists to promote the value and pleasures of the physical book and we are keen to get the thoughts of authors and book illustrators about their own influences, experiences and love of books. We are happy for you to make your answers as long or as brief as you are comfortable with and we will undertake not to edit or paraphrase any of your comments without your explicit permission.

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

**My parents read to me, and I was very affected -- still am -- by the books I was read at a young age, *The Wind In The Willows*, the *Winnie the Pooh* books, and many others. Later I discovered fantastic fiction, most notably from Ray Bradbury and JRR Tolkien, and that seemed to close a circuit. Reading work like theirs was the closest thing to the way I had felt when I was small confronting new and fascinating worlds in literature.**

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

**It was more that it was something that seemed to come naturally to me. I did a lot of other things as well -- art, theater, radio, music -- but writing was the first one that looked like it could be a career, and I was determined to do something creative with my working life.**

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

**It is successful if it enriches a reader's life. If he or she finds something in it they can take away with them, something that will make them somehow different than they were. It could be a major life change or merely an idea that will be useful or a moment of pleasure to remember.**

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

**The closest I can get to knowing an actual reader well is myself, so if I'm writing for anyone, I'm writing for people like me. Then I hope there are enough others like me out in the world to sell a few copies.**

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

**I think the electronic book will become the most common form of mass market fiction, but I think a beautiful book -- like a beautiful acoustic musical instrument -- will remain a thing of joy, artistry, and value.**

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

**I have many nice books I've obtained over the years, but for me it's what inside the covers that is by far the most important. I've been fortunate enough to meet a decent number of famous people I admire, but it's not the autograph or the handshake that mattered to me, and in many cases I didn't get either, but the memory.**

**That said, I am always happy to autograph my books for those who want it, because I'm thrilled anyone wants to commemorate meeting me or reading my work. The books I love and loved mean so much to me that I'm very honored when my work seems to hold that position for other readers.**

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:

**Karen Argent**

**Project Director [Karen.argent@btinternet.com](mailto:Karen.argent@btinternet.com)**