



The Letterpress Project

An Interview With Gill Lewis

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

I struggled to read as a child and really needed visual clues to guide my reading. But one book I loved was a non-fiction book: The Readers Digest Living World of Animals. It was a huge book that covered life on earth across the biomes – from polar regions to oceanic islands to tropical rainforests. It has a wonderful key at the back showing how the Animal Kingdom was classified. It was my route into the reading world.

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

I've always loved stories, listening to them and making them up in my head. I love sharing those ideas, but ultimately, my books are about protecting this planet for people and wildlife. So I write, because have something to say.

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

Any piece of writing or illustration that makes us look at the word a new way and makes us question and think and inspires our curiosity for more knowledge.

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

I write for the child – me. I write the adventures I would have liked to have had and the books I would have liked to read. I think it is hard to try

to write *for* an audience because you are trying to second guess what they might like.

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 there will be room for physical books. We have too much screen time and books offer an escapism without bright screens and batteries and chargers. Though I often wonder if e-books are more environmentally friendly.

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

Yes and no! I have big purges where I donate lots of books to schools. I can't throw them away as they have life somewhere else. I tend to keep beautiful non-fiction and illustrated books. My favourite book I own is a first edition of *The Snow Goose* by Paul Gallico and with illustrations by Sir Peter Scott.