



## The Letterpress Project

# An Interview With Sherry Shahan

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

*My parents read magazines and newspapers, so our bookshelves held framed photos of family and knick-knacks. A friend shared her copies of The Nancy Drew mystery series. I was drawn in by a female character around my age who embarked on thrilling escapades.*

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

*As an avid traveller, I began writing articles for magazines and newspapers: Hiking a leech infested rain forest in Eastern Australia, riding inside a dog sled during the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Alaska, and snorkelling with penguins in the Galapagos. My travels inspired Alaskan-based adventure novels for middle-grade readers Ice Island and Frozen Stiff.*

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

*I'm attracted by interesting characters and conflicts and plots with universal empathy and understanding. For me, it's the human element that reaches out and brings me in.*

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

*I tried to put myself in the mind-set of a teenager while writing PURPLE DAZE since the novel features six high school friends. Teenagers are still breaking away from authority and convention, and still forging their way into an unknown future, especially in today's tumultuous times.*

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

*I'm pleased to say that all three of my grandsons prefer physical books! They were raised with bookshelves in their bedrooms and that tradition continues.*

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

*I'm not a book collector per se due to limited space in my small home. Books that I cherish live in a floor-to-ceiling linen closet. Most beloved is *The Family of Man*, a photographic exhibition created for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, published in 1955.*