



David Small

Authors Up-close Movie Transcript

David Small, interviewed in his studio in Mendon, Michigan on May 18, 2002.

Program available at www.TeachingBooks.net beginning May 2004.

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Right now I'm finishing up a book called *The Essential Worldwide Monster Guide*. It's poetry. It's a kind of Fodor's guide to the monsters that you might encounter if you took a world trip — most of them mythological, such as the Sirens or the Big Foot.

This is really like film animation. I've got to draw the same figure in a series of poses, like he's climbing out of the muck. He's evolving — a Darwinian evolution of monster into man. I think it's wilder than anything I've ever done. It's been a lot of fun just to let loose with monsters.

Sketchbooks

I think some of my best work is done in my sketch journals. I carry one all the time because I want to record where I was and what I saw, but also some of what I was thinking about what I was looking at. When I look back through a sketchbook like this, I remember where I was, who I was with, what we were talking about. It's all there for me in a way that we don't get looking at a snapshot.

I like my illustrations to be specific to a place. When I did *The Journey*, for example, I wanted Chicagoans to know exactly what street corner they were on, because they'd be looking for those details.

On "The Journey"

I knew that I was going to be doing *The Journey* for years before it actually went into production, so I was preparing all those years. When we would visit our friends in the Amish community, I was constantly sketching the angle of a roof of a barn to how a horse gets hooked up to a buggy. I just have endless sketches of that.

I think *The Journey* is really a kind of there's-no-place-like-home story — wherever "home" happens to be. This young Amish girl, who has never seen the city before, is absolutely enthralled with this, really sort of alien civilization that she's always lived on the fringes of. What I

was after in the illustrations was a sense of silence. I try to tell what the text isn't saying. My wordless pages — I like them very much.

So You Want to Be...

My style really loosened up with *So You Want to Be President?* And it was fun. It was exhilarating. I just threw caution to the winds and just started having fun with my drawings and using every material I felt like, a little bit of chalk, some watercolor, pen and ink, colored pencil — whatever was at hand.

I've really enjoyed doing these So You Want to Be... books. Every time you turn the page, it's a different situation, a different mechanism, a different environment, a different part of the world.

Collaborating with Sarah Stewart

Sarah Stewart, who is my wife, and I, have done four books together to date. And when people ask us about our collaboration, we always sort of laugh and roll around and slap our knees, because it's not really a collaboration at all. Sarah does her work; I do my work. The books that I've done with my wife are really acts of love. And I think that accounts for their depth, their complexity, their soulfulness. They're the work of any relationship that's really worthwhile having.

Books by David Small

- WHEN DINOSAURS CAME WITH EVERYTHING (written by Elise Broach), Atheneum Books / Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, Date TBA
- ONCE UPON A BANANA (written by Jennifer Armstrong), Simon & Schuster, Date TBA
- FRIEND, THE (written by Sarah Stewart), Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004
- SO YOU WANT TO BE AN EXPLORER? (written by Judith St. George), Philomel Books / Penguin Young Readers Group, 2005
- ESSENTIAL WORLDWIDE MONSTER GUIDE, THE (written by Linda Ashman), Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- SO YOU WANT TO BE AN INVENTOR? (written by Judith St. George), Philomel Books / Penguin Young Readers Group, 2002
- COMPANY'S GOING (written by Arthur Yorinks), Hyperion Books for Children, 2001
- JOURNEY, THE (written by Sarah Stewart), Farrar Straus Giroux, 2001
- MOUSE AND HIS CHILD, THE (written by Russell Hoban), Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001
- SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT? (written by Judith St. George), Philomel Books / Penguin Young Readers Group, 2000
- HUCKABUCK FAMILY, THE: AND HOW THEY RAISED POPCORN IN NEBRASKA AND QUIT AND CAME BACK (written by Carl Sandburg), Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999
- AS SILLY AS KNEES, AS BUSY AS BEES: AN ASTOUNDING ASSORTMENT OF SIMILES (written by Norton Juster), William Morrow & Company, 1998 (a reissue of their 1989 collaboration)
- CHRISTMAS CROCODILE, THE (written by Bonnie Becker), Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1998
- GARDENER, THE (written by Sarah Stewart), Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997
- FENWICK'S SUIT, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996
- HOOVER'S BRIDE, Crown Books for Young Readers, 1995
- LIBRARY, THE (written by Sarah Stewart), Farrar Straus Giroux, 1995

- GEORGE WASHINGTON'S COWS, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994
- PETEY'S BEDTIME STORY (written by Beverly Cleary), HarperCollins Children's Books, 1993
- FIGHTING WORDS (written by Eve Merriam), William Morrow & Company, 1992
- RUBY MAE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY, Crown Books for Young Readers, 1992
- MONEY TREE, THE (written by Sarah Stewart), Farrar Straus Giroux, 1991
- BOX & COX (written by Grace Chetwin), Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1990
- AMERICAN POLITICS: HOW IT REALLY WORKS (written by Milton Meltzer), William Morrow & Company, 1989
- AS, A SURFEIT OF SIMILES (written by Norton Juster), William Morrow & Company, 1989
- COMPANY'S COMING (written by Arthur Yorinks), Hyperion Books for Children, 1988
- KING HAS HORSE'S EARS, THE (retold by Peggy Thompson), Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1988
- WHAT DID YOU PUT IN YOUR POCKET? (written by Beatrice Schenck de Regniers), 1986
- PAPER JOHN, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1987
- CHRISTMAS BOX, THE (written by Eve Merriam), William Morrow & Company, 1992
- IMOGENE'S ANTLERS, Crown Books for Young Readers, 1985
- ANNA AND THE SEVEN SWANS (written by Maida Silverman), William Morrow & Company, 1984
- DRAGON WHO LIVED DOWNSTAIRS, THE (written by Burr Tillstrom), William Morrow & Company, 1984
- GULLIVER'S TRAVELS (written by Jonathan Swift), William Morrow & Company, 1983
- MEAN CHICKENS AND WILD CUCUMBERS (written by Nathan Zimmelman), Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983
- EULALIE AND THE HOPPING HEAD, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982

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