

bios

Sam McBratney

"The response to this book just takes my breath away," says Sam McBratney of his award-winning bestseller, *GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU*. "I was talking to my agent about the text after I completed it, and she said, 'Sam, this book can do nothing but good.' I didn't really understand what she meant at the time, but now I know that she was thinking about the opportunities this book would create for wee ones and big ones to come together for a few precious moments."

The Northern Ireland native started writing children's books when he was a teacher in his thirties, with the aim of helping out students who had trouble reading. But he continued writing for a more-personal reason: "the act of imagining simply makes me feel good," he says.

The fifty-seventh book of Sam McBratney's career, and his first book with Candlewick Press, was the much-loved *GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU*, which has sold an astonishing 15 million copies worldwide and is available in 45 different languages. "This is not the sort of thing you expect when most of your books have been remaindered," the author admits. "But, as the frog trapped in the milk discovered, if you keep going, sometimes you find yourself walking on cream cheese."

Where does Sam McBratney get his inspiration? "I told my children stories when they were young," he says, "so when I write I try to think of what they would have liked." But there may be another source guiding his writing as well. The author's father--who worked as a type compositor with the *BELFAST TELEGRAPH*, and whose favorite books were westerns--is the person Sam McBratney credits for giving him his love of the English language. "Most of my picture books--*GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU*, *THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS*, *JUST ONE!*, and *JUST YOU AND ME*- explore the relationship between a big one and a wee one," the author notes. "The big one is not called the father in the stories, but that's what he is. Although my dad died before I became a writer, the father in my stories has a voice and a presence that he would have recognized and understood."

In addition to authoring many books for children, Sam McBratney has also written radio plays for adults and a prize-winning collection of short stories. He received a degree in history and political science from Trinity College, Dublin, and worked for many years as a teacher. Married, with three grown children, Sam McBratney lives today in County Atrim, Northern Ireland.

Guess How Much I Love You

author: Sam McBratney

illustrator: Anita Jeram

awards

1. Parenting Magazine Reading Magic Awards
2. American Booksellers Book of the Year Award, winner
3. Booklist Editors' Choice
4. FamilyFun, Best Book of the Year, Honorable Mention
5. Publishers Weekly Best Books of the Year
6. Not Just for Children Anymore!
7. ALA (American Library Association) Notable Children's Books
8. Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Award Winner
9. Child's Best of the Year
10. Not Just for Children Anymore!

Reviews

Five Owls, The

03/01/1995

" . . . their gamelike dialogue is fueled by love, and listeners should be of a mind, at the end, to nod off cozily."

Child

09/01/1995

"An extraordinary children's book that captures the unique dialogue between a parent and a child."

Booklist, starred review

03/01/1995

"There's not a wrong note in this tender tale, which should become an enduring bedtime favorite--right up there with GOODNIGHT MOON."

Publishers Weekly, starred review

03/13/1995

"Effused with tenderness, McBratney's wise, endearing and droll story is enriched by the near monochromatic backdrop of Jeram's pen-and-wash artwork, rendered earthy tones of moss, oft brown and gray for a visually quieting effect just right for that last soothing tale before sleep."

USA Today

04/17/1995

"Every parent will relate."

Family Life Magazine

11/01/1995

"If you're searching for a feel-good bedtime book, look no further."

bios

Anita Jeram

For Anita Jeram, illustrating *GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU* by Sam McBratney was a labor of love. Even today, she says, "Every time I read this book, I want to cry. The story reminds me so much of my own son, who often plays this kind of game with me when it's time for bed." An immediate problem arose during her early brainstorming for the illustrations, however: she had never actually seen a hare. Trying to be helpful, her paleontologist husband brought a stuffed hare home from the museum. In the end though, the winsome Big Nutbrown Hare and Little Nutbrown Hare grew out of her imagination.

Anita Jeram uses a noticeably different style in her illustrations for *KISS GOOD NIGHT*, a tender bedtime tale about a mother bear and a little bear, for which she collaborated with acclaimed author Amy Hest. "I had recently finished illustrating part of *IN EVERY TINY GRAIN OF SAND* (edited by Reeve Lindbergh), using acrylic paint for the first time, and I thought acrylics would give the pictures for *KISS GOOD NIGHT* some depth and warmth that I couldn't seem to get with watercolors," she says. "I visited the London zoo to look at the bears for inspiration, but it was a cold day and they all huddled asleep. So in the end I think Mrs. Bear is based on myself. She's rather tall and big built, but I hope she looks like a nice comforting mom to have." The illustrator carries the same soothing style into the sequel, *DON'T YOU FEEL WELL, SAM?*, drawing on her own children for inspiration. "My children love the anticipation of a snowfall, and to see a 'brand-new' crisp, white landscape outside is like magic," she says.

The illustrator of many other popular and critically acclaimed books for children, including *ALL PIGS ARE BEAUTIFUL*, written by Dick King-Smith, Anita Jeram has also written several children's books. In the popular *BUNNY, MY HONEY* she exercised her rabbit-drawing skills to tell the tale of a lost bunny who is reassuringly found by his loving mother. A rabbit again figures prominently in *I LOVE MY LITTLE STORYBOOK*, her magical tribute to the wonderful world of books.

Anita, a native of Portsmouth, England, studied art at Manchester Polytechnic and published her first book for children while she was still a student. Today, Anita lives in Northern Ireland with her family and a menagerie of pet animals including two toads, a lizard, a snake, and a box tortoise. In the future she hopes to establish a wildlife sanctuary.

I Love My Little Storybook

author/illustrator: Anita Jeram

A storybook to love, from the illustrator of GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU and KISS GOOD NIGHT

An eager little bunny lies on the grass and opens his book, and within moments, the story he's reading comes alive in fascinating detail. As the bunny reads on--lazing back against a tree root--Anita Jeram quietly ushers children inside the pages of a fanciful story. Exquisite watercolors capture a classic storybook world of enchanted forests, gentle lions, stomping giants, and sleeping princesses, offering just a glimpse of the any adventures waiting to be discovered through the magic of books.

Celebrate the joy of reading--and savor the art of the award-winning Anita Jeram at her best.

pub date:

03/2002

age range:

2 yrs - 5 yrs

grade range:

Preschool - Kindergarten

subjects:

Adventures; Imagination; Nature

author's comments:

Anita Jeram is the illustrator of many popular books for children, including GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU by Sam McBratney, KISS GOOD NIGHT by Amy Hest, and ALL PIGS ARE BEAUTIFUL by Dick King-Smith. She is also the author-illustrator of CONTRARY MARY; BIRTHDAY HAPPY, CONTRARY MARY; BUNNY, MY HONEY; and ALL TOGETHER NOW. As Anita Jeram explains, "I love books. I love the way they look, feel, and smell. My seven-month-old daughter does, too. She enjoys turning the pages - and, occasionally, tasting the pages!"

I Love My Little Storybook

author/illustrator: Anita Jeram

awards

1. Book Sense 76 selection
2. Scholastic Parent & Child - Best of 2002

reviews

Kirkus Reviews

01/01/2002

"Sure to warm the auricles of newly-independent readers (and older reading advocates) everywhere, this rhapsody features a brown-and-white bunny only a little bigger than its beloved storybook."

Publishers Weekly

12/24/2001

thrf

"Jeram's winsome watercolors...float this lightweight, agreeable tale."

Booklist

06/01/2002

"Jeram offers a paeon to reading."

School Library Journal

08/01/2002

"A small brown-and-white rabbit sings the praises of his book."

Scholastic Parent & Child

11/01/2002

circ=1,200,000

"In this sweet romp, an exuberant brown-and-white rabbit helps children discover the joys of books. The beautiful illustrations are a perfect complement to the fanciful narrative."