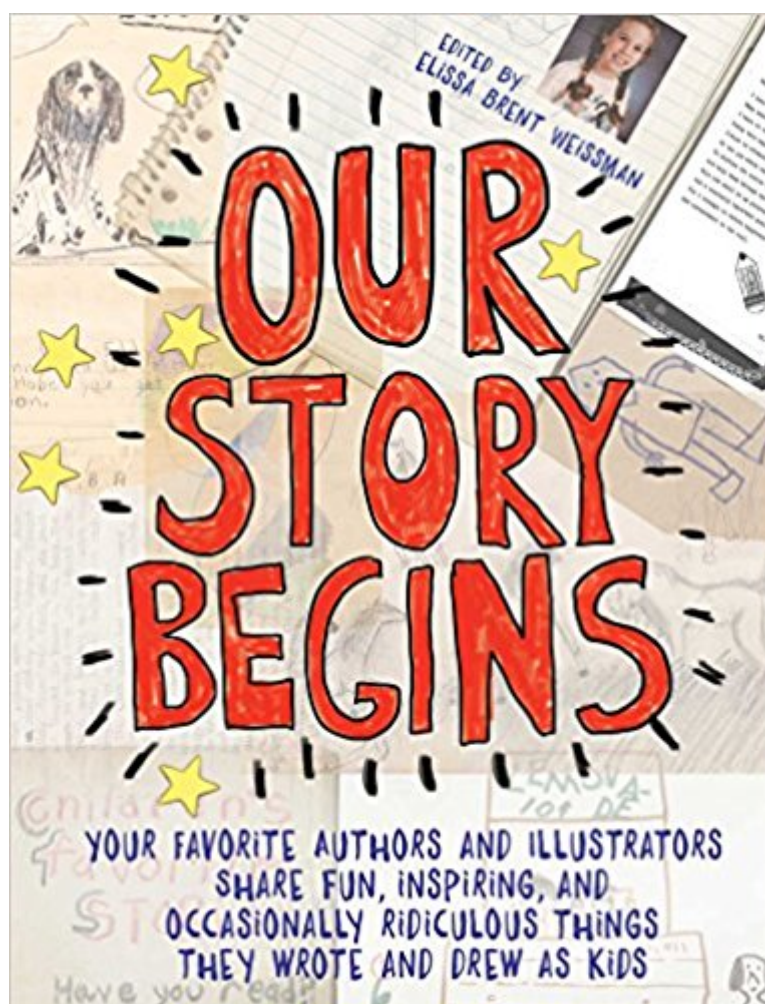


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# Our Story Begins: Your Favorite Authors And Illustrators Share Fun, Inspiring, And Occasionally Ridiculous Things They Wrote And Drew As Kids





## Synopsis

From award-winning author Elissa Brent Weissman comes a collection of quirky, smart, and vulnerable childhood works by some of today's foremost children's authors and illustrators—revealing young talent, the storytellers they would one day become, and the creativity they inspire today. Everyone's story begins somewhere. For Linda Sue Park, it was a trip to the ocean, a brand-new typewriter, and a little creative license. For Jarrett J. Krosoczka, it was a third grade writing assignment that ignited a creative fire in a kid who liked to draw. For Kwame Alexander, it was a loving poem composed for Mother's Day—and perfected through draft after discarded draft. For others, it was a teacher, a parent, a beloved book, a word of encouragement. It was trying, and failing, and trying again. It was a love of words, and pictures, and stories. Your story is beginning, too. Where will it go?

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #92,353 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Literary #83 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Reading & Writing > Composition & Creative Writing #130 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Jobs & Careers

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

"Twenty-six notable authors and illustrators of children's books—including the book's editor—introduce themselves via their childhood memories. The short, straightforward introduction begins with the editor sharing her inspiration for the book.... Two years of interviewing, collecting, and collating produced the accessible, enjoyable text that follows. Each creator shares a childhood photograph, a brief memoir, a short biography, and a photographed

sample of a creative work from childhood.... The art and writing samples from childhood are occasionally exciting but more often typical of the age represented—and thus encouraging rather than intimidating to young creatives. The memoirs all (unsurprisingly) engaging—range from humorous to serious, and some slip in good advice, both about the tools of the craft and about self-marketing. There is a wide diversity of ages and backgrounds, from Phyllis Reynolds Naylor to Alex Gino, from Eric Rohmann to Rita Williams-Garcia. Thanhha Lai is especially memorable; as a Vietnamese refugee, she had no box of writings: "But it turns out, I don't need tangible objects. I have my memories." Her recollection of an oral prose poem from age 8 is one that stands out because it is indeed remarkable for one so young. Good for aspiring writers and artists." (Kirkus Reviews, May 2017)"Firsthand accounts from 26 children's authors and illustrators describe how their earliest writing or drawing experiences resulted in a career in kid lit.... An attractive cover, glossy pages, and writing tips will make this a great addition to collective biography or career sections. VERDICT: An authentic, generous, and inspiring selection for tweens who wonder where their doodling or journaling might take them." (School Library Journal, May 2017)"The best authors and artists make their work seem so effortless that it's easy to assume they're all preternaturally gifted; it's easy to forget the inevitable time and labor that went into their work, and this collection is the perfect remedy to that misapprehension. In short sections, children's literature luminaries offer short essays about their early artistic efforts and snippets of their early work...the main takeaway, of course, is that hard work and practice, as well as a lot of inevitable failure, is always part of honing a craft. A sweet, inspirational anthology for any kid who dreams of one day having their own name on the cover of a book." (Booklist, June 2017)"This collection offers a lively glimpse of the artistic starts of twenty-six writers and illustrators for youth, with notable contributors such as Kwame Alexander, Dan Santat, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, and Linda Sue Park . . . The snapshots of the artists as young men and women are engaging and irreverent . . . There are a lot of shoutouts to influential teachers, a lot of early imitation (rightly recognized as a valid exercise), and a clear message throughout that this early work counts, whether you finish it, whether it's completely original, whether it wins you the regard you hoped this has curricular use written all over it (there's even tips for young writers at the end) and the encouragement is strong and valuable. Plenty of young readers will salivate at the notion of living the dream described by Jarrett J. Krosoczka: "What I do now for my job is exactly what I did for fun when I was a kid." (BCCB July/August 2017)

Elissa Brent Weissman is the author of *The Short Seller*, *Nerd Camp*, *Nerd Camp 2.0*, *Standing for Socks*, *The Trouble with Mark Hopper*, and the editor of *Our Story Begins*. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland. Visit her at [EBWeissman.com](http://EBWeissman.com).

Kathi Appelt is the author of the Newbery Honoree, National Book Award finalist, PEN USA Literary Award-winning, and bestselling *The Underneath* as well as the National Book Award finalist *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*, *Keeper*, and many picture books including *Counting Crows*. She has two grown children and lives in College Station, Texas, with her husband. Visit her at [KathiAppelt.com](http://KathiAppelt.com).

Ashley Bryan grew up to the sound of his mother singing from morning to night, and he has shared the joy of song with children ever since. A beloved illustrator, he was recently named a Newbery Honoree for his picture book, *Freedom Over Me*. He has also been the recipient of the Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award; the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award; has been a May Hill Arbuthnot lecturer; a Coretta Scott King Award winner; and the recipient of countless other awards and recognitions. His books include *Freedom Over Me*; *Sail Away*; *Beautiful Blackbird*; *Beat the Story-Drum, Pum Pum*; *Let It Shine*; *Ashley Bryan's Book of Puppets*; and *What a Wonderful World*. He lives in Islesford, one of the Cranberry Isles off the coast of Maine.

Tim Federle is the award-winning author of the autobiographical novels *Better Nate Than Ever* and its sequel *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* (Lambda Literary Award winner), which were named best books of the year by the New York Times and the American Booksellers Association, respectively, and was highly recommended by Hamilton Lin-Manuel Miranda, who called the series, "a wonderful evocation of what it's like to be a theater kid." *The Great American Whatever* was inspired by an accident near Tim's high school in Pittsburgh that changed the community forever. It is his first novel for young adults. Connect with the author on Instagram and Twitter at [@TimFederle](https://www.instagram.com/TimFederle), and at [TimFederle.com](http://TimFederle.com).

Candace Fleming is the acclaimed author of numerous books for children, including *Ben Franklin's Almanac*, an ALA Notable Book and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults; as well as *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*; *Gabriella's Song*; and *When Agnes Caws*; all ALA Notable Books. She lives in a suburb of Chicago.

Marla Frazee was awarded a Caldecott Honor for *All the World and A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*, and the Boston Globe Horn Book Award for Picture Book for her wordless book *The Farmer and the Clown*. She is the author-illustrator of many books, including *The Boss Baby*, the book that inspired the DreamWorks Animation film *Boss Baby*. She has illustrated many acclaimed picture books, including *God Got a Dog* by Cynthia Rylant; *Stars* by Mary Lyn Ray; and *Everywhere Babies* by Susan Meyers. She is also the illustrator of the New York Times bestselling Clementine chapter book series by Sara Pennypacker. The mother of three grown

sons, she lives in Pasadena, California. Visit her at [MarlaFrazee.com](http://MarlaFrazee.com). Jarrett Krosoczka graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design and is the author and illustrator of many great picture books including Punk Farm, Good Night, Monkey Boy, Baghead, Max for President, and the Lunch Lady graphic novel series. He lives in Northampton, MA, with his family. Peter Lerangis is the author of many books for young readers, including wtf, Smiler & Bones, the Watchers series, The Sword Thief, and the New York Times bestselling 39 Clues series. Peter lives with his wife and two sons in New York City. Visit him at [PeterLerangis.com](http://PeterLerangis.com). Phyllis Reynolds Naylor has written more than 135 books, including the Newbery Award-winning Shiloh and its sequels, the Alice series, Roxie and the Hooligans, and Roxie and the Hooligans at Buzzard & Roost. She lives in Gaithersburg, Maryland. To hear from Phyllis and find out more about Alice, visit [AliceMcKinley.com](http://AliceMcKinley.com). Eric Rohmann is the Caldecott Medal-winning illustrator of My Friend Rabbit and received a Caldecott Honor for Time Flies. He has both written and illustrated numerous books for children, including Oh, No! and Bone Dog. He lives in Oak Park, Illinois. Dan Santat is the Caldecott Medal-winning and New York Times bestselling author and illustrator of The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend, as well as the illustrator of many other picture books, including Crankenstein by Samantha Berger. Dan lives in Southern California with his wife, two kids, and various pets. Brian Selznick is the author and illustrator of the bestselling The Invention of Hugo Cabret, which was awarded the Caldecott Medal and was a National Book Award finalist. He is also the illustrator of many books for children, including Frindle and Lunch Money by Andrew Clements, as well as the Doll People trilogy by Ann M. Martin and Laura Godwin, and The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins by Barbara Kerley, which was a Caldecott Honor Book. Mr. Selznick divides his time between Brooklyn, New York, and San Diego, California.

My sons Chris and Logan read this book and really enjoyed it. Logan's Review: I really liked this book. Some of the stories were really funny. The stories were entertaining and kept my attention so I was able to finish reading in just a couple hours. My favorite story was Marla Frazee's where she was talking about John always dropping stuff. In Dan Santat's story, I liked when he was talking about how even though he couldn't draw very well, he never gave up. That teaches you to keep trying no matter what. I thought it was awesome that Jarrett J. Krosoczka finished his story when he was in the third grade at age 8. I like the pictures that were included of each author when they were little and the drawings and things that they did. It was really cool to see all of those. Chris's Review: I really enjoyed looking at all of the pictures that the authors

drew when they were little. That was pretty neat and some of the pictures were really unique. The different stories were pretty funny. My favorite one was by Yuyi Morales. Everyone's story was so different and interesting so I never got bored while reading this book. It was entertaining.

What an amazing compilation of stories and illustrations by some of today's best kidlit people! I loved hearing about their 'why' for writing and also how it wasn't perfect that first time. So many children think they need to be perfect and successful on their first attempt at anything, and this book shows that it does take time. Our Story Begins will make an excellent addition to any classroom or school library and readers of all ages will enjoy it!

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