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Lehua Parker



Lehua Parker is an award-winning writer born and raised in Hawai'i. Known as "Aunty Lehua," Parker has worked as an author, editor, publisher, and public speaker. After graduating from Kamehameha Schools, Parker moved to Utah, though she always finds her way back to the islands.

Parker is known for weaving pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English) into her work, as seen in her Niuhi Shark Saga. This three-book series, which begins with 2017 Nene Award nominee *One Boy, No Water*, starts in the middle grade genre and shifts into young adult literature as it follows the story of young Zader Westin. Zader, a creative, hanai (adopted) boy living in the fictional town of Lauele, O'ahu, faces several challenges that will feel familiar to many—and some that may not feel so familiar. As if scuffles with school bullies, mounting academic pressure, and questions about his familial history weren't enough, Zader also has a strange quirk: He is allergic to water.

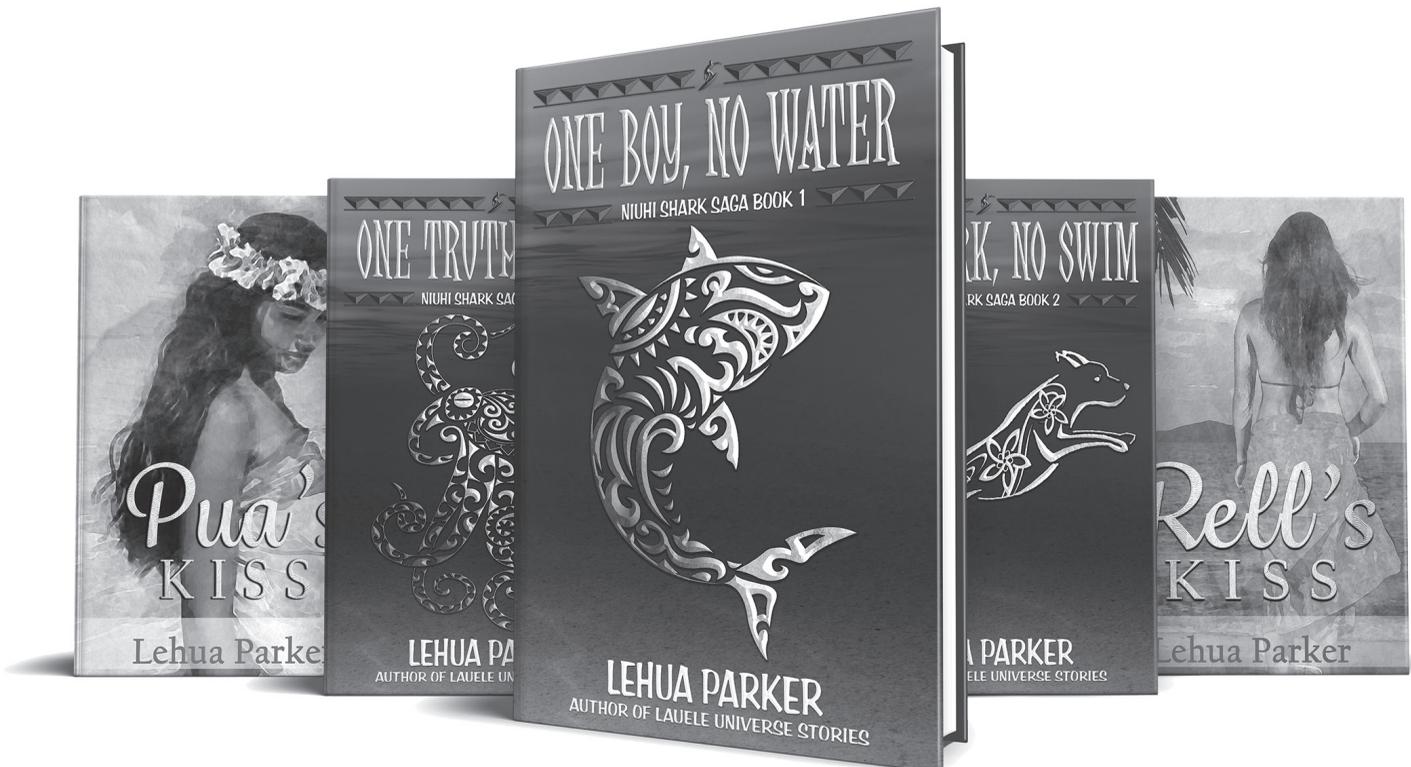
Though her trilogy is her most popular work, Parker has also published several pieces of poetry, screenplays, essays, short stories, and novellas, many of which are retellings of classic fairy tales with hints of Hawaiian culture and

mythology. Some of her books and novellas have been published through Makena Press, her own self-publishing company. Parker advocates for both traditional and self-publishing and often guides other authors as they navigate similar paths to publication.

When it comes to writing for middle grade and young adult audiences, Parker believes that readers should be able to recognize and relate to the stories and characters in literature. It is this conviction that has led her to blend cultural elements into her works. Yet Parker also warns against leaning on stereotypes; in her Niuhi Shark Saga, every character has varying talents, interests, and passions, a challenge to those who tend to box Hawaiian and Pacific children into a single category or skill set.

Parker's philosophy extends past her written work and into her everyday activism. She promotes local and Pacific-based writers on her blog and continuously advocates for diversity in literature. Whether she is speaking at conferences, teaching new writers how to get started, or writing stories for the next generation, Parker is unquestionably working for the children of Hawai'i.

To learn more about Lehua Parker and to keep up with her blog, please visit her website, LehuaParker.com. ■



Caren Loebel-Fried



Caren Loebel-Fried is a Hawai'i-based artist and author. Despite spending some time on the mainland, she now considers the Big Island her home. After learning the technique of block printing from her mother, Loebel-Fried was inspired to pursue her passion for art. Her Kozo handmade paper prints are created from intricately carved linoleum blocks, a testament to her endless patience. She is

strongly driven by her love of nature, fighting for native species conservation both in Hawai'i and around the world.

A self-proclaimed ornithophile, Loebel-Fried considers her five-week stay on Midway Atoll in 2014 to be one of the highlights of her career. There, she counted and observed nesting albatrosses. After her trip, she began work on celebratory art for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Loebel-Fried has also created artwork featuring the palila (Hawaiian honeycreeper), 'alalā (Hawaiian crow), 'akiapōlā'au (another Hawaiian honeycreeper), nēnē (Hawaiian goose), pueo (Hawaiian short-eared owl), and kōlea (Pacific golden plover).

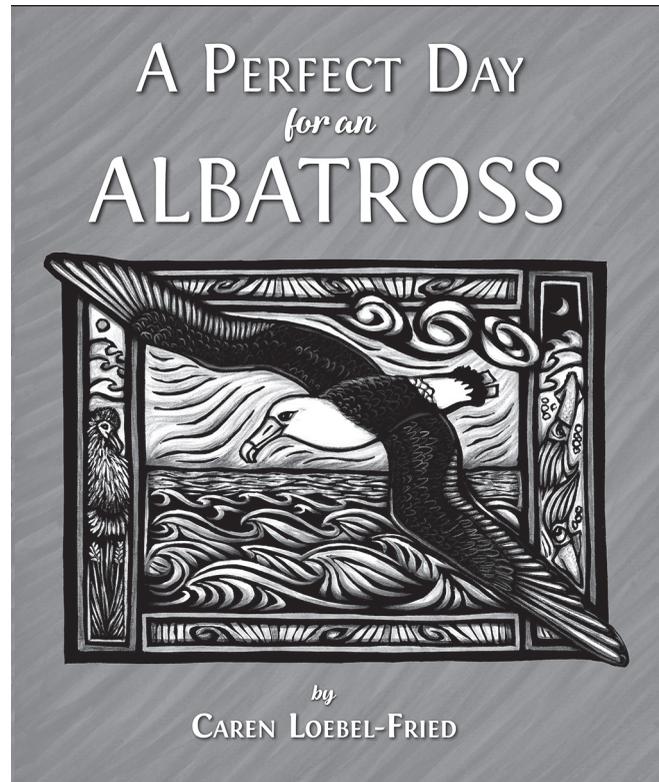
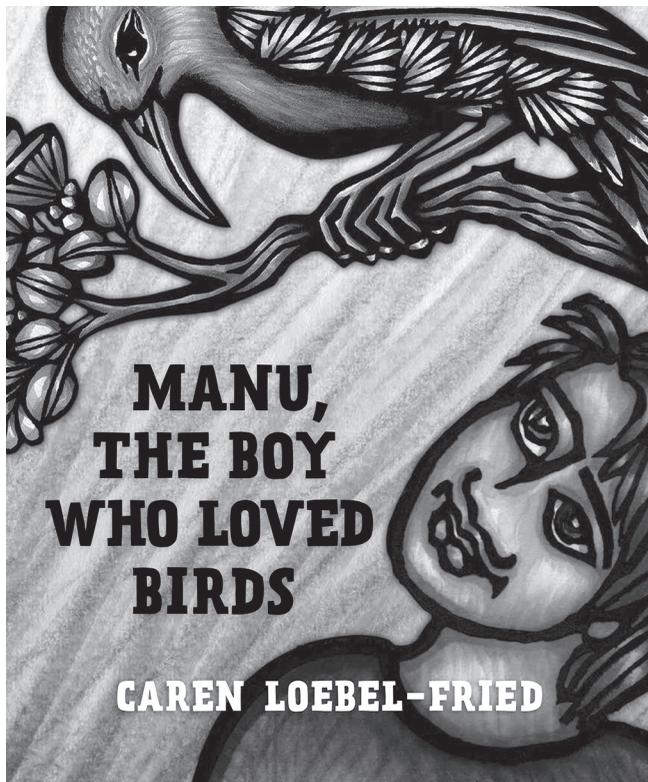
Birds may be her first love, but Loebel-Fried also works with other important animals and plants, including the Hawaiian monk seal, honu (turtle), kō

(sugar cane), kalo (taro), mai'a (bananas and plantains), 'ōlena (turmeric), and 'ōhi'a (type of flowering tree). Her spirit of inquiry and devotion to the natural world have inspired her to spread the word about the beings that cannot speak for themselves.

Loebel-Fried has crafted six award-winning books about birds and Hawaiian legends, including *Hawaiian Legends of Dreams, Lono and the Magical Land Beneath the Sea, Hawaiian Legends of the Guardian Spirits, Naupaka*, and *Legend of the Gourd*, all of which received the Hawaii Book Publishers Association Ka Palapala Po'okela Award. She has also worked with authors Howard Schwartz and Nona Beamer to bring other stories to life.

Her art has been displayed at the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge on Kaua'i; and she has worked closely with the Conservation Council for Hawai'i, creating educational posters featuring the 'ō'ō (honeyeater). Her art has been featured as the logo for several organizations, including Village Burger Kamuela, Volcano Art Center, and, of course, Children's Literature Hawai'i. Her most recent publication, a book of full-color illustrations titled *A Perfect Day for an Albatross*, combines her distinctively beautiful block prints and factual information on bird conservation, a perfect representation of Loebel-Fried's work.

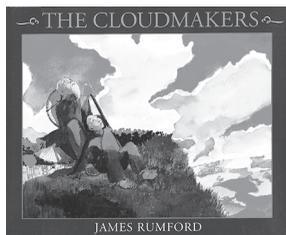
To learn more about Caren Loebel-Fried and to view her beautiful gallery, please visit her website, CarenLoebelFried.com. ■



Knowledge in the Picture Books of James Rumford: The Second Part of an Essay in Progress

BY JOSEPH STANTON

James Rumford is an internationalist of the picture-book form. His love of the multicultural and international is obviously evident, for instance, in his love of languages. (He has studied twelve.) Rumford's books are frequently about seeking knowledge and journeying. Often, the two missions combine so that the journey is in behalf of seeking knowledge. At the heart of many of his books is the consideration of the nature of language and the role played by language in telling and showing what the world is. In his books, words are often also pictures; pictures are often also words. The genius of his best books is commonly fueled by the interrelation of words and images. As important as his linguistic expertise is to the mission of his work, his knack for visual design is often what most contributes to making his books uniquely compelling. This article consists of excerpts from a longer, unfinished essay. In this discussion of Rumford's works, I will consider books dominated by his interest in knowledge.

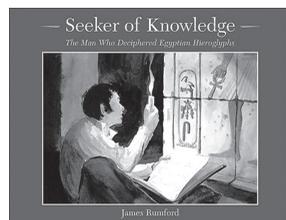


***The Cloudmakers* (1996)**

The Cloudmakers (1996), one of the first of the Rumford books to address the value of knowledge, differs from his later such books by not showing us a character who is seeking knowledge. The knowledge in *The Cloudmakers* is already possessed by a Chinese grandfather,

and the plot has to do with the arrival of a need to demonstrate that knowledge. Rumford places the grandfather and grandson in the year 751 A.D. and has them captured by the Great Sultan of Samarkand. The pair avoid being sold into slavery by means of the grandfather's demonstration of his talents as a "cloudmaker." What the story refers to with gentle wit as "clouds" is, in fact, one of the greatest of all Chinese inventions, rice paper. The Arab captors are so impressed with the old man's skill and its product that the grandfather and grandson are asked to provide training in the precious art of cloudmaking and then "the Sultan gave them their freedom and filled their pockets with gold."

The gentleness of this transaction and the somewhat stereotyped character of the grandfather mean that this book is a fairy-tale-like story whose fictional demeanor somewhat differs from subsequent Rumford books about knowledge, which are more explicitly and extensively tied into historical details. Nevertheless, this well-told tale with its lovely watercolor illustrations is both eloquent and elegant. It beautifully reveals to its audiences of children and their parents that paper, something we so much take for granted, was once an innovation and a product that developed in a particular cultural context and was subsequently and gradually shared with the larger world.

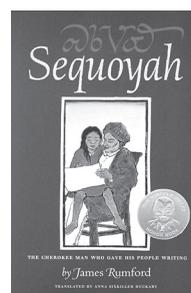


***Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (2000)**

Among Rumford's most compelling books about seeking knowledge declares his theme in its title, *Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered*

Egyptian Hieroglyphs (2000). This book tells the story of Jean-Francois Champollion, the man most responsible for the solving of the mystery of the Rosetta Stone, who thereby unlocked the key to deciphering ancient Egyptian writings. This astonishing picture book manages to convey intricacies of a very highly specialized linguistic topic in such a way as to convey the excitements of an historically important investigation in a kid-friendly manner. The key to the power of this book is that Rumford gets the reader to identify with the enthusiasm and curiosity of his young protagonist. Above and beyond the extent to which the children reading this book can fully comprehend the nature of Champollion's achievement, there is, in these pages, a capturing of the worthiness of the ambition to learn and a demonstration that even a child can aspire to making important discoveries. In the center of the book, when young Champollion is turned away by adult scholars who do not feel that a mere boy can be of any help to their studies, Rumford declares that these old guys were failing to appreciate how much a young person can accomplish: "They did not see the fire burning in his eyes. They did not recognize the genius who had already learned all the known languages. They did not know that he was a seeker of knowledge, one who would not rest until he had found the answer."

Among the delights of *Seeker of Knowledge* is the scattering, throughout the text, of little lessons in the meanings of the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Rumford enhances the fun of these pictures-that-are-also-words by subtly and gently teaching the reader to understand them. He tells the reader that we can all understand this; and, by the time we reach the end of the book, we find, to our surprise, that we can. This rare book makes the history of knowledge and the knowledge itself fun to consider. The watercolor illustrations well illustrate the developing narrative, while line drawings of the hieroglyphs sometimes appear in the borders of the text, sometimes are sprinkled in the text itself. *Seeker of Knowledge* encourages receptive young people to dream big dreams about trying to solve the puzzles of the world.

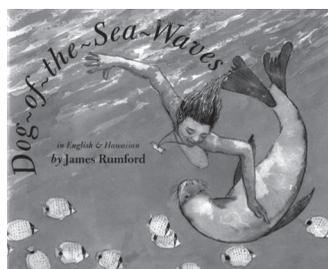


***Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing* (2004)**

In 2004, Rumford published another remarkable consideration of knowledge and language in *Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing*. As with *Seeker of Knowledge*, we have a person determined to address a seemingly impossible task of knowledge, and, once again—because of the protagonist's dedication, hard work, and the arrival of key insights—the difficult

goal is reached. Among the striking contributions of this book is the inclusion of translations of the text into the Cherokee language that are presented underneath the English. To accomplish that, Anna Sixkiller Huckaby served as translator. Once again, the graphic appearance of the Cherokee translations and their placements on the pages contribute to the graphically effective book design. The prominent size Rumford gives to the non-English lettering in his books is a declaration of equality. He asserts by book design that all languages are equally important and that the language that the reader is less familiar with is actually all the more fascinating *because* it is less familiar.

In a note at the front of the book, Rumford comments on the technique of his woodblock-print-looking illustrations. “The illustrations were done with ink, watercolor, pastel, and pencil on drawing paper adhered to a rough piece of wood, the texture of which was brought out with each pass of chalk and colored pencil.” He cites two contemporary artists (one Native American and one Chinese) as influences on the style of these pictures. He also mentions that the example of ukiyo-e woodcuts by Hiroshige were helpful with regard to the handling of a tall, narrow format. Clearly, Rumford was seeking a stylized, woodgrain look for these attractive pictures. Indeed, this format and style combine to communicate his story simply and clearly. As with many of the best picture-book makers, Rumford effectively adapts his picture-making style from book to book to achieve results attuned to the nature of each project. His images as well as his words are nets to capture knowledge.

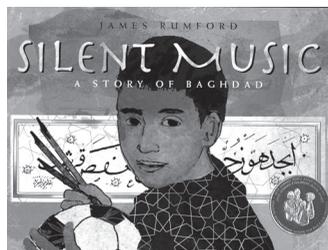


Dog-of-the-Sea-Waves (2004)

Another book Rumford published in 2004, *Dog-of-the-Sea-Waves*, presents knowledge in another sort of way. This book is, on one level, a sequel to his 1998 book *The Island-below-the-Star* in that it involves the same five Polynesian brothers presented in the earlier

book, but this time the story is not about journeying; it is, rather, about a witnessing of the flora and fauna of the Hawaiian islands that the voyaging brothers encounter upon their arrival. While the plot of the book primarily concerns the friendship of the youngest brother with a native-to-Hawai'i species of seal, Rumford uses the book as a whole to present many of Hawai'i's native flora and fauna. Some of the Hawaiian species—such as the 'ō'ō'ā bird, the milletseed butterflyfish, the 'i'iwi bird, the nene goose, and the 'io hawk—are shown in action in their environment, while numerous others are depicted and labeled in the margins and corners of the text. Altogether twenty-two species are included. In the concluding pages of the book, Rumford catalogs these living things and provides details about their past and/or present situations in Hawai'i. His appendix also provides a map of the Hawaiian islands, which features not only the major inhabited islands but also the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, those dozen or so small masses of land that are seldom noted in books about Hawai'i but that are crucial environments for some of the species Rumford is telling us about.

Although Rumford has jam-packed this book with information, the simple charm of the plot and the loveliness of the watercolor illustrations make it a book of knowledge that young readers can easily enjoy. A subtitle of the book indicates that it is “in English and Hawaiian,” and this promise is fulfilled by a double-page-spread complete translation of the text into Hawaiian that is provided at the back of the book. With the translation in hand, a parent, teacher, or elder who wanted to read the entire book out loud in Hawaiian while showing the pictures to children would be able to do so.



Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad (2008)

Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad could be James Rumford's most beautiful book thus far. I am tempted to call it his masterpiece, but perhaps that is premature; no doubt, he has

many other masterful pieces up his sleeve that will be forthcoming in the future. The excellence of this book is difficult to describe. It needs to be seen to be appreciated.

In this book, Rumford's talents that we have seen in others of his books—his use of collage, his knack for color and design, and his genius for presenting language as graphic form—all come together to great advantage. The “silent music” of the title is the calligraphic writing of the Arabic language lovingly practiced by a young boy in emulation of Yakut, an ancient Afghanistani scholar. Knowledge resides in this book in references to Yakut and in demonstrations of the art of calligraphy, but the knowledge is quietly blended with the everyday life of a boy who loves to practice the striking movements of both calligraphy and soccer. Actions involving the visualization of both these activities sing across Rumford's pages as calligraphic marks and soccer-game movements. In this book Rumford wonderfully manages the visual possibilities of collage. The collaging of calligraphy, fabric patterns, pieces of currency, soccer cards, advertising pictures, and so forth blend and weave in the fabric of this gorgeously rich but, nonetheless, easy-to-enjoy book.

This book has more strong points than can be easily cataloged. One nicely ironic point is made when the boy demonstrates for the reader that the calligraphy for the word for war, *harb*, is dangerously easy to write, while the word for peace, *salam*, is a challenge to the calligrapher. The pervasiveness of war in Baghdad in recent years and the unavailability of peace is a sad fact that the book regretfully illustrates in several beautiful ways. We have here a celebration of calligraphy and boyhood that is also a lament for the seeming inescapability of war and its ravages.

Conclusion: Journeys to Knowledge

For Rumford, knowledge is a much-celebrated good thing, and a journey is both a way to gain knowledge and a fine thing in its own right. He understands the world to be wide, diverse, and full of puzzling matters that require intellectual effort to solve. The challenges of knowledge are not, however, for Rumford, concerns to be feared or avoided. For his characters, every complication to be grasped is an opportunity to be welcomed. There is an exhilaration available to Rumford's characters in their difficult circumstances that drives his narratives. We can readily identify with his questing characters because Rumford so clearly and compellingly tells their stories and so beautifully illustrates them. ■

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Living (in) Arts

BY SARAH GOODSON

Writing in May 2020, I decided to set aside my original piece about forms of children's literature and literary experiences to speak, instead, to the shape of our current moment: how does a global pandemic impact and inform how we conduct ourselves in our homes, in our communities, in the world at large? How do children make do in a world overturned by chaos and the great unknown? As we decided to postpone the conference in the wake of a monumental health crisis, we considered the ways in which the arts continue to speak to and toward people; how audiences read and view the artifacts of writers, painters, potters, and other crafters; how children, especially, find themselves in communities and neighborhoods and territories designed in the pages of their favorite book or in the vibrant colors of their favorite picture or in the layers of a handmade quilt.

Creativity is a vehicle, a conduit for exploration and world-making. Where children read and view art produced by other creators, they also engage in production. Peter Cumming (2017) remarks that we should pay attention to children's literature, not as the genre is most notably understood to be literature *for* children but also literature *written by* children. Kelly Wissman (2019) positions children's picture books as spaces in which to examine our shared spaces, to compose social texts for children to understand and make (better) worlds. Shoshana Magnet and Catherine-Laura Dunnington (2020) describe books as modes of emotional articulation, allowing children and youth to learn how to identify and sit in even the hardest of their feelings. Through reading and writing, children and youth can identify and articulate realms: the one in which they live, the ones they can imagine, and the one they wish to make. Literature, in its many forms, provides space for children and youth to exist in the creative, the metaphor, the language and power of narrative. Pictures with and without text enable children and youth to develop connections and even texts of their own. Literature enacts a fluidity of being, and children—who desire to build and embody environments that are better and that are kinder—then learn and build and engage with multiple places and people and experiences. Simmi Sikka (2020) reminds us that reading is a lifelong practice, and for children—especially—this practice develops capability to make social impact. Nicolae Babuts (2018) even points to reading as dynamic, solidifying the construction, interpretation, and understanding of language(s) that then fosters lifelong and permanent learning. Reading is critical to children's development not only as scholars, but as human beings, as members of society.

Children are experiencing COVID-19 in ways much different and perhaps even less obvious than adults. Their school days are moved online; preschool children have gone weeks without recess and playtime with their peers; libraries are closed; their homes are their boundaries. They need now, acutely, the promise that literature and art make to them: that through stories and characters and illustrations, children can join a story and make their own. What literature and art give children is the continuous opportunity to live, to fantasize, to create without limitation, to imagine without restriction. Literature and art teach children the power of words and images, the boundlessness of dreaming, and the connections made with other readers, writers, and artists simply through the arrangement of words (and/or images) on a page. While our children await, perhaps impatiently if not certainly with fatigue and restlessness, to rejoin their classmates and their schoolyards and their teachers in a semi-normal routine, books can be and are their escape. Or,

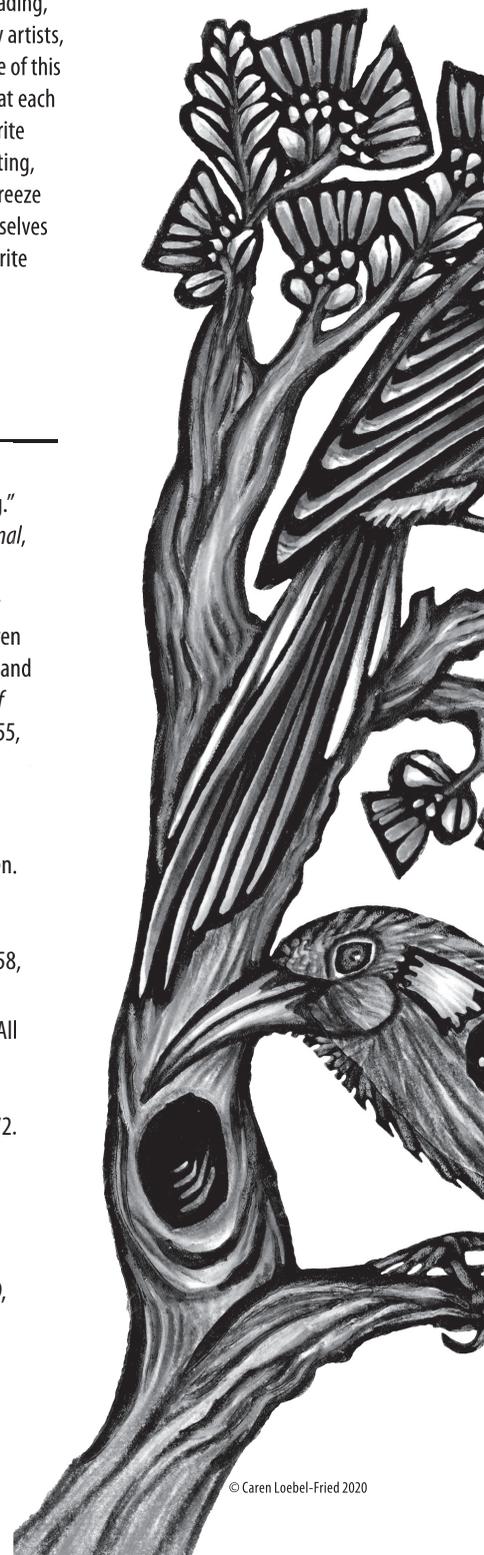
better yet, books can be and are their entry, their invitation, their permission to simply be. Curling up in the closet with a flashlight, nestled in their favorite corner of the sofa, spread out at the kitchen table with a novel and their breakfast plate are the very scenes we should be thankful for. That our children turn to art to define, interpret, and understand while they simultaneously conceptualize and construct answers is precisely the gift literature gives. In a time of upheaval, literature is the constant. Let us cultivate and support their love of the systems and spaces created for them in the dog-eared and bookmarked pages of their books.

We approach this conference through the lens of a pandemic, shifting social patterns and community behaviors, caring for our neighbors and our families, and supporting the love of and engagement with the arts as a vehicle for children to imagine better, more loving, kinder domains. We wish each of you the joy of reading, of viewing compositions produced for us by artists, and of making your way through the nature of this world by conceiving new ones. We hope that each of you can become a character in your favorite story, join the scenery of your favorite painting, lay under the trees and feel a comforting breeze across your (masked) cheeks, and find yourselves taken once more into the body of your favorite literary character.

Mahalo nui for your continued support for Children's Literature Hawai'i. ■

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Making What You Love What You Do: The Art and Adventures of Caren Loebel-Fried, Our Featured Illustrator

BY SUE COWING

Caren Loebel-Fried is a second-generation linocut artist who learned the art of block-printing from her mother while growing up on the Jersey shore. As a young girl, Caren loved to sit on the beach in summer and play with the curls of wood that fell from her mother's gouging tool. Later, her mother carved from linoleum; and Caren adopted that medium too as she became a block-printer in her own right. (Recently her favorite substitute for linoleum is recycled rubber block.)



Her mother is no longer working, but Caren still shows and discusses with her everything she is working on and treasures her input. In contrast to her mother's exploration of personal themes in her prints, Caren draws her images from her fascination with nature.

As an adult, Karen fell in love with Volcano. She now lives in the rainforest on Hawai'i Island, where she loves waking to the sunrise songs and sounds of native 'apapane, and where she can pursue and combine her art with her interest in the natural world and its preservation.

Many people associate linoleum block-printing with an art project done in elementary or middle school, an introduction to the printing process that might result in a handmade greeting card or other print to take home. But beginning in the early twentieth century, the German Expressionists and other artists such as Matisse, and even Picasso late in his life, began to experiment with linoleum as an alternative to wood block. Linoprinting quickly became a fine art medium that is used by many contemporary print artists.

Matisse created some of his finest prints by simply cutting an outline image into the linoleum block so that, when the block was inked, the lines of the drawing would show white on a background of black. Caren Loebel-Fried does the opposite, carving out everything except the lines and shapes that she wants to show, which then take the ink and appear in black; she also utilizes the carved-out places as negative space in her designs.

In his 70s, Picasso had several commissions to make posters, and linocuts seemed the ideal solution for producing multiple copies easily. But he wanted to use several colors, and that was more complicated. The usual way, as in woodblock printing, was to carve a block for each color and print them separately, carefully registering the blocks so that the multiple printings would line up exactly. Picasso experimented and came up with a new "reductive" method, in which you carve and re-carve the same block and print as many times as you have colors. This process proved almost as exacting as registering!

For her prints, Caren Lobel-Fried uses a simpler coloring method. Her dynamic, rhythmic, designs are characterized by strong black and white lines and spaces, and have an almost folk-art feel. Some of her images, as in our logo, remain black and white; but, when she wants color prints, she colors her original piece by hand with pencils. Hand coloring allows for shading and creates warmth and dimension in the designs. To make additional prints, she has the original professionally scanned, making sure the colors exactly match, for museum-quality prints.

Caren says: "I think of my art as visual story-telling. And for me, the most important stories to tell are about our natural world, how we humans fit into it, and how we can help care for it." This idea has shaped Caren's career. She has been commissioned to design posters for a number of conservation groups and wildlife refuges here: an 'Alala for the Hawaiian Festival of Birds; lighthouse and wildlife for Kilauea Point National Refuge; nesting albatrosses for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge; native bird, turtle,

duck, bat, and mollusk images as “passport” stamps for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and a monk seal for Conservation Council for Hawai’i’s annual wildlife poster.

Caren has always had a keen interest in birds; and, somewhere along the line, albatrosses “soared into my life,” luring her from the rainforest back to the ocean. The more she learned about albatrosses, the more her love and wonder deepened for these birds, who spend their lives in flight over the open ocean and only touch land to mate and nest.

In 2014, Caren had an opportunity to go on a bird census trip to Midway, the main nesting ground of Laysan albatross at the far end of our archipelago, and to literally surround herself with her favorite birds. In two weeks, the census crew counted over 600,000 nests!

Caren sketched and photographed the wildlife and topography all over Midway. She wrote down observations and questioned biologists to learn more about albatrosses. For instance, she learned that albatrosses lay one egg and talk to it. And that, despite their great numbers, they are endangered while on land, not only because of storm surge, ocean garbage, and fishing nets, but also because they are so devoted to their eggs. Nothing can distract

them or move them from their nests, not even mice, who prey on them while they sit warming their eggs!

Caren realized that these birds would be a fascinating wildlife and conservation story for young people, and she decided to make a book about them. Three years later, in 2017, her highly acclaimed picture book, *A Perfect Day for an Albatross*, which takes the reader into an albatross’s world, was published in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Caren also has a passion for preserving, depicting, and sharing traditional stories; and she has created and/or illustrated a number of award-winning books about Hawaiian legends and folklore, some in collaboration with Nona Beamer. She also has made a couple of books of Jewish stories, which are not as well known as those of some other traditions.

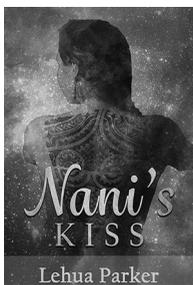
The guest illustrator for our conference is always asked to create a logo that shows a child and a dragon reading a book. The swirling composition of Caren’s stunning design resembles that of a yin/yang symbol. And, so fitting for a conference on literature and Hawai’i’s children, she depicts the child and a mo’o-looking dragon reading—about a mo’o. Just look at the child’s toes—those are definitely lu’au feet! ■

Lehua Parker, aka Aunty Lehua, Our Featured Author

BY CARYN LESUMA

Our featured writer for the 20th Children’s Literature Hawai’i conference is Michelle Covalt Parker, better known by her pen name, Lehua Parker, or as “Aunty Lehua” by youth throughout the islands and beyond. As an advocate for diverse voices in literature, particularly from Hawai’i and the Pacific, Parker has experience as an author, editor, publisher, and public speaker. Her fiction often draws on her experiences growing up speaking Pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English) in Kahului (on Maui) and Kalama Valley (on O’ahu). A graduate of Kamehameha Schools, Parker now lives in Utah, where she drinks diet coke during writing sessions and plans frequent trips home.

Here in Hawai’i, Parker is best known for her Niuhi Shark Saga, a three-book series comprising the novels *One Boy, No Water* (a 2017 Nene Award nominee); *One Shark, No Swim*; and *One Truth, No Lie*. Set in the fictional town of Lauеле, O’ahu, the series starts out in the middle-grade range, where artistically talented Zader Westin deals with bullies, pressure to get into a prestigious private school, and an unfortunate allergy to water. As the series progresses, Parker moves into YA (young adult) territory as Zader, who is hānai (adopted), learns to make tough decisions about his heritage and family relationships while finding fulfillment in using art as a vehicle to protect the ocean.



In addition to the Niuhi Shark Saga, Parker has also published a variety of short stories and novellas set in the Lauēle Town universe. Some of them function as prequels to the series, such as *Birth: Zader’s Story*, while the Lauēle Fractured Folktales Series—*Pua’s Kiss*, *Rell’s Kiss*, and forthcoming *Nani’s Kiss*—retell classic fairy tales like *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *Beauty and the Beast* with a place-based Hawaiian twist. Appropriate for older

teens and adults and originally published as part of a Fairy Tale Ink series featuring fractured fairy tales, the novellas have been revised and republished by Makena Press. Parker’s other publications include short stories, poetry, screenplays, and essays.

Parker’s philosophy about writing for youth is based firmly in the belief that young people should be able to see themselves in literature. She argues that “kids need access to stories that resonate with their experiences, that are full of people they know and love, that show themselves—their fully authentic selves—as powerful, valued, and real. We need Pacific voices raised in song, dance, print, film, tv—all forms of media, some not even invented yet” (“We Need”). In her own work, she does this by creating characters and cultural contexts that are familiar to local youth. For example, the Niuhi Shark Saga portrays surfing, shoreline and offshore ecosystems, hula, local food (from sashimi to laulau), and much more, all while many of the characters speak in Pidgin. The youth in the novels are also multitasking, with a wide variety of gifts that range across the academic, athletic, and artistic spectrum; the message is that everyone has talents and that all talents are valuable and worth cultivating. For local and Hawaiian youth frequently negatively stereotyped in terms of language, ethnicity, and abilities, Parker’s books offer new possibilities for creatively building the future.

Another way that Parker enacts her writing philosophy is through active participation in local writing communities and within the school system. Her blog, LehuaParker.com, actively promotes Pacific writing and frequently highlights local and Pacific writers and their works. She reviews books by writers throughout Oceania as well as in her local region in the Rocky Mountains. She also purchases their work as part of her commitment to support Hawaiian and Pacific Islander writers, even if she can’t (yet!) read the works written in

indigenous languages (“Book Review”). She cites this as an important part of her activism, asserting that

If we do not write our own stories, we cannot be surprised when outsiders attempt to write them. With no other voices in popular culture, these stories become the truth for the majority, and we soon find ourselves living in a world enamored with Bobby Brady’s tiki curse, hip-hop hula, and coconut bras. If we want to change the popular cultural narrative about what it means to be Hawaiian, Samoan, Maori—we need to tell our own stories in our own voices. It means supporting our Pasifika artists, musicians, dancers, and writers with more than our applause and appreciation. (“It’s Disney’s Moana”)

Parker also makes frequent school visits as Auntie Lehua, including many throughout the state of Hawai‘i, to talk about her books, promote literacy, and inspire youth to become writers. For teachers, she has developed free resources at NiuhiSharkSaga.com, which include discussion questions, writing activities, an “Island-Style Dictionary,” and a variety of additional resources and information on the series. She also frequents conferences and symposiums, where she gives presentations and workshops on author development, the importance of diversity in literature, and why youth should tell their own stories.

As if writing and advocating for youth and other writers isn’t enough, Parker also offers services as a freelance editor and self-publishes work through her own Makena Press. She has experience in both traditional and self-publishing, and she uses her experience to assist authors in developing, self-publishing, and marketing their writing.

As one of very few Hawaiian writers publishing for the young adult and middle grade market, Parker has become an important voice advocating for literacy

and the importance of highlighting the experiences of local youth in literature. She also plays an important role in growing the field through her support of other writers and development of successful self-publishing strategies. Parker’s work embodies Zader’s explanation of his art activism at the end of the Niuhi Shark Saga: “Humans only love what they can understand, what they can see with their own eyes and feel in their hearts. My art gives them a reason to care. And if enough people care, then change is possible” (*One Truth* 253). As we continue to experience changes in publishing, education, and literature for young people, let’s hope that voices like Zader’s (and Parker’s) become the norm, rather than the minority. ■

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“Where Are They Now?”: Revisiting the Featured Guests of Past Conferences

BY KELLY MURASHIGE

With the arrival of the Twentieth Biennial Conference on Literature and Hawai‘i’s Children, it is natural to look back to the past. Children’s Literature Hawai‘i (CLH) carries with it a history of passionate, creative minds, of those who never truly grew up and who use their talents to enrich children’s lives. Though catching up with all thirty-eight authors and artists is a little too ambitious for this article, it seems fitting to revisit the guests who helped CLH celebrate its fundamental milestones.

Eleanor Cameron, 1982 Conference Featured Author

The featured author from our first conference, Eleanor Cameron, spent forty-three years as a published author. Naturally, her list of books is almost long enough to become a book itself. One of her most notable works is *The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet*, published in 1954. In the years afterward, she wrote five other books to complete a series about the wondrous adventures of two young male protagonists. She also created another series, starting with *A Room Made of Windows*, that revolves around fourteen-year-old Julia Redfern. The same year as CLH’s first conference, 1982, the third book in the Julia series, *That Julia Redfern*, was published. Cameron continued to

create children’s books for another decade. In 1993, she published her final work: an essay collection called *The Seed and the Vision*.

Though Cameron passed away in 1996, her legacy lives on. Scholar Paul V. Allen has dedicated much of his life to keeping Cameron’s memory alive, with an entire website devoted to her works and her words. In 2019, he gave a lecture at Illinois State University, where he spoke about Cameron’s contributions to science fiction and children’s literature. Because of people like him—and because of the love so many of her readers have for her—Cameron will continue to inspire people of all ages for years to come.

Peter Spier, 1982 Conference Featured Illustrator

Born and raised in Amsterdam, Peter Spier was a Caldecott-winning author and illustrator who created art for about one hundred and fifty books. Most known for his gorgeous illustrations in *Noah’s Ark* (which won the 1978 Caldecott Award) and *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night*, he used line art, watercolors, and other media to bring animals and stories to life. His attention to detail was unmatched, and his bright, vibrant colors left readers spellbound. Spier also hid

little visual jokes in his artwork; in *Noah's Ark*, Noah takes eggs from his colorful chickens for his breakfast on the ark. In *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night*, Spier mixed color drawings and black and white art to encourage his readers to imagine the colors and details themselves. He also noted that, because his art was sometimes not accompanied by text, he had to “give the story in drawings, mine showing the work, the mess” (“Peter Spier Author Video”).

Spier passed away at the age of eighty-nine in 2017; but he, like Eleanor Cameron, is survived by his art. Even in his later years, he was a child at heart. His love for colors and animals never faded. When asked why he pursued a career in illustration for children’s books, he said that he did it simply “for the kids and the child within myself” (“Peter Spier Author Video”).

Susan Cooper, 1992 Conference Featured Author

Best known for her *The Dark Is Rising* series, Susan Cooper won a Newbery Honor in 1974, then a Newbery Medal two years later. She became famous not only for her stories’ wonderful sense of place—which she attributes to her childhood in the Thames valley, her holidays on the Cornish coast, and her time with family in the Wales valley of the Dovey—but for the way in which she weaves together the real and the fantastic. Following the death of her parents and a divorce, for example, Cooper wrote *Seaward*. This 1980 book features two children who challenge the Janus-faced ruler Taranis, a personification of death.

Though Cooper first gained attention in the 1970s and 1980s, she remains active in the literary world today. She revived her 1990s series *The Boggart* in 2018, a reaction to the election and presidency of Donald Trump. She read that Trump once attempted to develop part of Scotland, much to the displeasure of the area’s residents. In response, Cooper asked herself: “what if someone like Trump came along and tried to build a development around the beloved loch and the castle that were the setting for the first two books [of *The Boggart* series]? And what if the Boggart and the kids found a way to get rid of him?” (Lodge). She understands that nothing, including politics and harsh realities, should be off-limits in children’s literature. It is as she once said: “children do not belong to a separate race; they are us, not yet wearing our heavy jacket of Time” (“About Writing for Children”).

Tomie dePaola, 1994 Conference Featured Illustrator

Beloved artist Tomie dePaola worked on over 270 books over the course of his life. The winner of a Smithsonian Medal, the Society of Illustrators Original Art Show Lifetime Achievement Award, a Caldecott Honor, a Newbery Honor, and a Children’s Literature Legacy Award, he resided in New Hampshire until his passing in March 2020. He was best known for his *Strega Nona* series and the standalone book *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*. He lived humbly, his home a 200-year-old renovated barn; but he was always a big dreamer. He was determined to become an artist since he was four years old, and he never lost sight of his ambitions.

He once noted in a 1999 interview that the works that most resonated with his young audience were the ones directly inspired by experiences from his own life. This certainly seems to be the case. His *Strega Nona* books, a reflection of his grandparents’ hometown in southern Italy’s Calabria, were being published even through 2017. His 1979 book *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* is still both beloved and challenged today. Considered groundbreaking because of its blunt questioning of gender roles, *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* features a young boy who would rather dance or read than play sports with his peers. Oliver becomes the target of bullying, but he refuses to give up on his passions—much like dePaola himself.



Lois Lowry, 1996 Conference Featured Author

No one would have known it from her polished presentations at our Conference, but in 1996, Lois Lowry was still hurting. Just one year earlier, she had gotten the devastating news that her son, Grey, had died in an F-15 crash. It would have been natural to lose herself in grief.

Yet Lowry had recently published *The Giver*, a book entirely focused on the importance of memories and the power of emotion. Instead of giving up, Lowry chose to rededicate herself to literature. She returned to *The Giver*, writing a sequel, then expanding it into a series. The final book, *Son*, came out in 2012. Throughout the series, and in every book she writes, she emphasizes the power of compassion and love. She herself notes, “My books have varied in content and style. Yet it seems that all of them deal, essentially, with the same general theme: the importance of human connections” (“Biography”).

Even over twenty years after her time with Children’s Literature Hawai’i, Lowry is writing stories. Her book about World War II, *On the Horizon*, came out in April 2020. During the 2020 pandemic, she continued her work as an author, researching a new book and keeping in contact with teachers who wanted to use her books in their online classes. Though she has seen more than her fair share of tragedy, noting that *On the Horizon* was inspired by a 1940 home video where she was playing on Waikiki Beach, right near the USS Arizona, Lowry chooses to channel her losses into empathy. She hopes that children will read her books, find comfort in them, and use their sadness to reach out to others, as she does every day.

Patricia MacLachlan, 2000 Conference Featured Author

The recipient of a National Humanities Medal in 2002, Patricia MacLachlan has refused to forget her prairie roots. Since her time as our featured author in the year 2000, she has published three more stories in her *Sarah, Plain and Tall* series: *Caleb’s Story*, *More Perfect Than the Moon*, and *Grandfather’s Dance*. In a 2010 interview, she spoke out about her writing process, explaining that “you write how you grew up. And . . . everything is kind of spare on the prairie” (Roper). Yet with her pithy and crisp prose, MacLachlan crafts stories that take readers back to the place she loves. She has written and continues to write about the prairie to honor her childhood home. In fact, in her interview, she mentions that she carries a bag of prairie dirt with her whenever she travels.

She has published several books since 2000. In 2013, she published *Cat Talk* with Emily MacLachlan Charest, her daughter, and Barry Moser, our 2008 featured artist. Her most recent publication is *Prairie Days*, a collaboration with artist Micha Archer. This book is a return to MacLachlan’s nostalgic, beautiful life on the prairie, her beloved home.



Ed Young, 2000 Conference Featured Illustrator

Ed Young is the illustrator of over eighty children’s books, almost a fourth of which he has also written. He draws inspiration from Chinese paintings and culture; and, in 2016, he was awarded the Society of Illustrators Lifetime Achievement Award for his contemporary, innovative work. Since his appearance at our conference, he has gone on to create many more stories. In 2014, he sat down for an interview and mentioned his then-upcoming book, *Should You Be a River* (2015). He explains that it was a response to the passing of his children’s mother eight years prior. He speaks of how nature can care for and love children in almost maternal ways.

In 2020 alone, he published *The Weather's Bet*, a mixed-media retelling of Aesop's *The Wind and the Sun*; *Vessel of Promises: A Bookish Fable*, an accordion-style collaboration with author Stephen Cowan about "the life of a library and the impact that books and reading can have on people throughout the world" ("*Vessel of Promises: A Bookish Fable*"); and *Night Shadows*, a collaboration with author Barbara DaCosta. Young's list of works continues to grow; and yet, in every new book, he somehow finds a way to surprise his readers in the best ways.



Jerry Pinkney, 2006 Conference Featured Illustrator

An illustrator since 1964, Jerry Pinkney is one of the most celebrated and inclusive children's book artists in the nation. He has received a Caldecott Medal, five Caldecott Honors, five Coretta Scott King Awards, and four Coretta Scott King Honor Awards. In 2006, the same year as our Conference, he was given the Original Arts Lifetime Achievement from the Society of Illustrators in New York. Five years later, he would be inducted into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame. His works, which often include ethnically and culturally diverse retellings of beloved fairytales, have encouraged children to be proud of their skin colors and ancestors.

Pinkney's desire for inclusivity extends beyond race and ethnicity. Diagnosed as dyslexic, he has a special place on his website dedicated to learning differences. He writes, "Drawing shouldered the weight of my deficiency. I was putting marks on paper to learn and make peace with myself" ("*Learning Differences*"). He also focuses on stories about oft-neglected populations, as he does in his 2016 collaboration with author Richard Jackson. *In Plain Sight: A Game* tells the story of Sophie and her grandfather, whose mobility has become restricted as he has aged. His 2009 work with Marilyn Nelson, *Sweethearts of Rhythm: The Story of the Greatest All-Girl Swing Band in the World*, shines a spotlight on a 1940s interracial, all-female band from a boarding school in Mississippi. Pinkney says that, though he has illustrated over a hundred children's books, his wish "is that all ages will be able to find something that touches them in some way" ("*Biography*"). Based on his body of work, it can be agreed that Pinkney has achieved his goal and will continue to spread positivity and joy for generations to come.



Barry Moser, 2008 Conference Featured Illustrator

Barry Moser's path to art was anything but conventional. After struggling in ministry, he changed paths and started studying etching and wood engraving, then printing and typography. He produced his first letterpress book, *The Red Rag*, in 1969 using his Pennyroyal Press; and he still makes books today. Now known for his engravings, watercolors, reinterpretations of old classics, and prints, his work can be found in more than 350 books. In the years since his time as our featured artist, he has continued to create, working as the illustrator for *Cat Talk*, the 2013 book by Patricia MacLachlan and her daughter.

Perhaps his most intriguing venture since 2008, however, is his 2015 book, *We Were Brothers*. This illustrated memoir examines Moser's life growing up with his brother, Tommy. The two, raised in Tennessee in the 1940s, were brought up in what Moser calls a racist and anti-Semitic environment. Moser's love of the arts and subsequent move to New England pulled him apart from Tommy, who remained in Tennessee and became a mortgage banker. As Moser approached sixty, the two brothers had a relationship-ruining argument that kept them apart for years. *We Were Brothers* chronicles their brotherhood and struggle to reconcile. It may not be his usual type of work, initially written for

his family, then an adult audience; but his hope is that he can spread a message of reconciliation and redemption, a universal wish for the world.



Pam Muñoz Ryan, 2012 Conference Featured Author

Pam Muñoz Ryan, the author featured alongside James Rumford in 2012, has had an eventful nine years. Now the author of over forty books, she has been nominated for the international Hans Christian Andersen Award and has published several noteworthy books. *Echo*, her 2015 novel about "a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise and a harmonica" ("*Echo*"), won the 2016 Newbery Honor prize and the Kirkus Prize. Interestingly, this book was published the same year that *Esperanza Rising*, one of her most well-known books and a Pura Belpré Medal winner, celebrated its fifteenth anniversary.

In 2020, she published *Mañanaland*, a middle-grade novel about Maximiliano Córdoba. Maximiliano, or Max, sets off on an adventure, led by his Buelo's legends of a gatekeeper who guides those who dare to follow him to journeys unknown. Ryan understands that stories like Max's, stories of dreamers fleeing from oppression, need to be told. She says, in a 2020 interview, "This story is an old story and a new story. . . . It happened decades ago, it is happening now, and it will continue in the tomorrows to come" (Heimbach). Yet that is not to say that Ryan is a pessimist. She adds that compassion is a part of every story she writes, and she hopes that children can identify with Max and always choose compassion over despair.

Children's Literature Hawai'i is proud to have had such dedicated, pioneering authors and artists as our conference guests. As we look forward to our twentieth conference, we also want to recognize and show our gratitude for the many creative people who have helped us to promote children's literacy and creativity. May we all continue to learn, grow, and foster the child within our hearts for the next twenty conferences and beyond. ■

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Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Biennial Conferences on Literature and Hawai‘i’s Children

BY SHERRY ROSE

Like so many other organizations, it was our intention to hold our regularly scheduled conference in June of 2020. This was to be the Twentieth Biennial Conference on Literature and Hawai‘i’s Children in the year 2020. Then along came *The Virus*. Due to this pandemic, our conference was rescheduled (for June 2021); and, even though it is no longer the 20th in 2020, we **are** celebrating next year our 20th conference and furthering our mission with special guests Lehua Parker and Caren Loebel-Fried.

The mission of Children’s Literature Hawai‘i (CLH) encompasses the belief that literature should be a primary part of every child’s education. CLH promotes various opportunities to experience, interpret, and create children’s literature through activities such as reading, storytelling, art, drama, song, and scholarly discussion. Our premier activity is the Biennial Conference. Each three-day conference is a celebration for students, parents, teachers, librarians, writers, illustrators, and others who are interested in literature for children. We are pleased that our conference is the longest-running event of its kind in Hawai‘i.

Every two years, then, our two featured guests—an award-winning author and illustrator—dazzle audiences with stories of their personal struggles and triumphs. They share read-alouds and exquisite artistic displays. There are breakout sessions and children’s activities, and professional learning and special teen workshops with the featured author and illustrator. The breakout sessions (presentations and discussions) are designed around three strands: interpreting literature (ways of reading literature), using literature (at home, in school, in libraries), and creating literature (producing and publishing).

The 1982 inaugural conference featured Eleanor Cameron, who wrote the wonderful Mushroom Planet Books; the incredible featured artist was Peter Spier, who survived the Holocaust and worked as a commercial artist before writing and illustrating children’s books. Jane Yolen and Arnold Lobel came to us in 1984, followed by Jean Fritz and Michael Hague in 1986. In 1988, Katherine Paterson and Nancy Ekholm Burkert shared their work and expertise. Patricia Wrightson and José Aruego were 1990’s featured invitees; and, in 1992 we were honored to have the very talented Susan Cooper and Gerald McDermott.

The first biennial conference attended by this writer was in 1994. Lawrence Yep and Tomie dePaola were so popular that sessions held in large rooms at a hotel were standing room only—absolutely amazing. Having attended my first spectacular conference that year, I have not missed any of the next twelve.

In 1996, Lois Lowry returned to Honolulu to be with us. She was born here. Trina Schart Hyman was the guest artist that year. Eve Bunting and Dennis Nolan followed them in 1998. Patricia MacLachlan, who prefers to be called Patty, and Ed Young were featured in 2000. At our conference in 2002, Christopher Paul Curtis shared that his wife said he could quit his full-time job, but he only had a year to see if he could succeed as a full-time author (thankfully, he did); and William Joyce shared his wonderful illustrations. Nancy Willard not only writes wonderful books, but she is also a well-known poet. In fact, Willard was the first person ever to receive the Newbery Medal for a volume of poetry. Paul O. Zelinsky is famous for his beautiful illustrations

and for retelling and illustrating fairy tales such as “Rumpelstiltskin” and “Rapunzel.” Willard and Zelinsky were our featured speakers in 2004.

Karen Hesse and Jerry Pinkney followed Willard and Zelinsky in 2006. They were both especially popular with teachers, many of whom were very familiar with their work. Another popular duo came two years later in 2008. Ralph Fletcher writes picture books, young adult fiction, and poetry. He is also well-known for his books for both children and educators on the art of writing. Barry Moser is a celebrated artist and printmaker who shared his amazing black and white prints with those at our conference. In 2010, Linda Sue Park and Brian Selznick shared their talent with us. Both of these professionals worked well together and were also impressive individually. Pam Muñoz Ryan and James Rumford delighted our audiences in 2012. Both are excellent storytellers. Although Rumford was officially our featured illustrator for this conference, he is both an illustrator and an author; and he lives right here in Honolulu. At the following conference in 2014, we welcomed author Kathi Appelt and another illustrator who is also a writer Grace Lin.

One more author with local ties was featured at our 2016 conference. Graham (Sandy) Salisbury grew up in Hawai‘i and is well-known for his books set in the islands such as *Under the Blood-Red Sun* and his Calvin Coconut Series. Steve Jenkins, also featured at the 2016 conference, is a graphic designer, illustrator, and author. He is our first illustrator who focuses on non-fiction subjects. His books include *The Animal Book* and *Actual Size*. He often collaborates with his wife, author/illustrator Robin Page.

2018 brought us to an emphasis on the literature of Oceania and the Pacific. Our featured presenters were Lee Cataluna, an award-winning playwright and novelist who is based in Hawai‘i on the island of O‘ahu; and Patrick Ching, a well-known nature artist and author who lives in Princeville, Kaua‘i. Cataluna’s books include *Ordinary ‘Ohana* and *Folks You Meet at Longs: And Other Stories*. Patrick Ching’s beautifully illustrated books include *The Hawaiian Monk Seal* and *The Turtles of Hawai‘i*; and he has also created a series of educational coloring books with titles like *Endangered Animals of Hawai‘i*, *Beautiful Birds of Hawai‘i*, and *Exotic Animals in Hawai‘i*.

With each new conference, “our favorite” becomes the current one. Every conference pairs two of the best contemporary authors and illustrators of children’s literature that allows us to experience the delight, the joy of interacting with outstanding published professionals. The Twentieth Biennial Conference on Literature and Hawai‘i’s Children affords us that same exceptional opportunity. Enjoy! ■

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Contributors to the *Humanities Guide*

Sue Cowing has been involved with the Biennial Conference since the 1990s, often serving as facilitator for the featured artist's teen workshop. Her books include *Fire in the Sea: An Anthology of Poetry and Art* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1996); *My Dog Has Flies: Poetry for Hawaii's Kids* (BeachHouse Publishing, 2005); a novel for middle-graders, *You Will Call Me Drog* (Carolrhoda, 2011; Usborne UK, 2012; and HarperCollins UK, 2014); and *The Octopus of Imagination: Poems* (produced by Mutual Publishing, 2020).

Sarah Goodson is currently a doctoral student in the UH-Mānoa Department of English, having earned her M.A. with a concentration in cultural studies in Asia/Pacific from the same department in 2017. Her many research interests include feminist rhetorics, cultural rhetorics, indigenous rhetorics, and legal rhetorics; especially germane research interests for our conference are Pacific literature in English, Hawaiian literature in English, and family and motherhood. She has reviewed for *College Composition and Communication*, and she has presented at two Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association conferences. She also had a paper accepted for the 2020 Rhetoric Society of America conference, which was cancelled as a result of the pandemic. She is the Conference Co-Director for the Twentieth Biennial Conference.

Caryn Lesuma is an assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, where she serves as the Composition Coordinator. Her research interests include young adult literature, literatures of the Pacific, and place-based pedagogy and rhetoric. She has been a member of the Children's Literature Hawai'i Steering Committee since 2017, and she was the Conference Director for the 2018 conference.

Kelly Murashige is a 2020 honors graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In her junior year, she was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as an English major and Political Science minor. She is the Conference Co-Director for the Twentieth Biennial Conference. Raised around books and libraries, she has worked at Hamilton Library throughout her time at the university as a student assistant and a staff Library Assistant. She wants to remain a reader, writer, and dreamer for the rest of her life.

Sherry Rose received her BEd, MEd, and MLISc from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and has been teaching in Hawai'i's public schools since 1970. She spent ten years as the librarian at Pauoa Elementary School and is currently an English teacher at Farrington High School in Kalihi. She is a member of the American Library Association and has served as a board member and as President of the Hawai'i Association of School Librarians. From 2017-2020, she served as the Secretary of the Honolulu Chapter of the Hawai'i State Teacher's Association. She attended her first Biennial Conference in 1994. She is a long-time member of the Children's Literature Hawai'i Steering Committee and has served as Conference Director (2010) and also as Mistress of Ceremonies for the last several conferences.

Todd H. Sammons has been involved with the Biennial Conferences on Literature and Hawai'i's Children since he did a presentation at the second conference in 1984. He was the facilities coordinator for the 1992 conference; also starting in 1992, he has been on all but one of the conference steering committees since then (that's 14 out of 15, not that anyone is counting); and, somewhere along the line, he became President of Children's Literature Hawai'i. His day job is Associate Professor in the UH-Mānoa Department of English, where he has taught more than 50 different courses since arriving in Hawai'i in 1980. His academic specialties are Renaissance English literature, Milton, rhetoric, and science fiction. Recently, he began directing the UH-Mānoa Writing Center. He is also a past President, a past Vice President, and the current Secretary of the Alpha of Hawai'i Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Finally, he is on the Board of the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, the major funding organization for our conference.

Joseph Stanton's books include *Looking for Edward Gorey; The Important Books: Children's Picture Books as Art and Literature; Moving Pictures; Things Seen; Imaginary Museum: Poems on Art; A Field Guide to the Wildlife of Suburban Oahu: Poems; Cardinal Points: Poems on St. Cardinals Baseball; Stan Musial: A Biography; and A Hawaii Anthology*. His essays and poems have appeared in such journals as *Poetry, Harvard Review, New Letters, Michigan Quarterly Review, Antioch Review, Children's Literature, The Lion and the Unicorn, American Art, Journal of American Culture, Art Criticism, and Nine: The Journal of Baseball History and Culture*. He is a Professor Emeritus of Art History and American Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He occasionally teaches poetry-writing workshops, such as the "Starting with Art" workshops that he has recently taught at the Honolulu Museum of Art and at Poets House in New York City. He has been involved with the Biennial Conference on Literature and Hawai'i's Children since the late 1980s.