



The Letterpress Project

An Interview With Mel Wardle Woodend

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

As a child, I loved Enid Blyton's The famous five books. I remember being poorly in bed and my mum gave me a hardbacked dark red copy of Five Go To Smuggler's Top that had been my mum's as a child. I absolutely loved it and the sense of adventure got me hooked on reading.

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

I've always loved creating characters and stories. Before I could write, I used to make these up using emergent "scribble" and reading them back to my mum and dad and our pet dog!

I think I just wanted to be able to make up exciting stories and descriptive poems to give other people enjoyment in the way that authors had given me.

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

Something that captures the audiences attention and makes them think or moves them in some way.

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

Yes, because most of my work will be themed so I know a specific audience will be interested, for example, mental health poetry will hopefully be read by those who may find solidarity in the poems, and environmental poetry will appeal to people interested in climate change and the environment.

Also, when I write stories, I will be aiming these at children or an adult audience as appropriate.

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

I think the physical book will always be here. There are so many in circulation around the world and although I think electronic books have their place, technology is always evolving and replacing one device with another but a book will always be something you can just pick up and read. I think there is a permanence to physical books like no other.

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

I am a book hoarder! I love all sorts of books and have old books belonging to my grandparents and great grandparents in my collection, as well as a myriad of new books I have bought and second hand books from charity shops.

I love beautiful books and one of my favourites is *The Humument* by Tom Phillips, which I have a hard back final edition that brings the project to a close after exactly fifty years.