



**The Letterpress Project**

**Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

# **An Interview With Satoshi Kitamura**

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

We had some small square shaped picture books in English. They were brought back by my father who traveled in US around 1960. In those days it was very rare to see a book in any foreign language. They looked exotic and very different from Japanese books. I liked their colours and the otherness of the world they depicted.

I cannot remember a single book that I felt attached to but I was always attracted by illustrations in picture books and magazines. There were quite a few books on art, and exhibitions catalogues, at home. I must have been influenced by them.

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

I always draw ever since I was small, and became interested in books in my teens. It is the best way to combine my two interests: stories and pictures.

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

I have no idea about what makes for success in commercial terms. I suppose if I could achieve something better than I usually do in the process of the production of a book, it must be a success. I mean if the story has something new in it and the drawings come naturally, I feel quite satisfied.

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

Basically, I do whatever I want to do, but am aware that my books are read by 5 and 6 year olds, and try to make it readable for them - but it doesn't mean simplifying it. Often adults are less perceptive about certain things and you have to make an extra effort to make them understand, while you have no such trouble with children. As long as the book has integrity, it must make sense to most of people.

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

I don't think physical books will be replaced by electronic books completely in the near future. This is a bit like asking minstrels whether they could survive after Gutenberg. We still have storytellers.

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

I'm not a collector. I have lots of books but they are not special editions.