

Dear Friend,

Much has happened since I wrote Caterpillar Express #3. Have you missed one or all of my earlier newsletters? If so, and you would like to have them, just let me know and I'll be glad to send them to you. You may also wish to click onto my web site at www.eric-carle.com, where you can download the past issues.

First, let me say that I treasure every letter, e-mail, artwork, photograph from children, parents, teachers, librarians and others. At times I am overwhelmed by the love that flows from so many of you to me. Some letters I receive are funny, some serious, some sad. Some tell me of their lives, some want answers to their questions. Many tell me that my books inspire them.

Recently a teacher told me of an autistic child who does not speak except to say "Eric Carle." A mother told me about her hospitalized daughter who was intravenously fed and relearned how to eat with the help of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. I never dreamed that my books would have such a far reaching impact. I am deeply touched by these stories.

Before I tell you of the many interesting things that have happened since my last newsletter, I would like

to answer some more of your excellent questions.

Did you have a specific piece of music in mind when you created *I See A Song*? Because the word song is in the title, people tend to think this book is about music. Yes, in part it is about music, but it is also about feelings, especially those feelings that are hard to put into words – and don't we all have those sometimes?

Years ago my editor, Ann Beneduce, suggested I do a book about feelings. *I See A Song* was my response. I just let my intuition flow. One child wrote to say this book is about the creation of the universe. I didn't specifically think about that, but that child is right. A young teacher wrote to me that this book made her very sad. She too is right, although I had not thought about that either. It is a book that can be interpreted in many ways.

I have seen children and their teachers perform plays based on this book. One time, an adult dancer covered in a white sheet, danced in a darkened room as slides from *I See A Song* were projected onto her, with music by Mozart being played. I loved it!

Do you listen to music as you work? When I paint my tissue papers, which I later use to make my collage illustrations, I like to listen to music. Mozart is my favorite composer. Occasionally, I like to listen to jazz. But when I work on the actual illustrations, I need to keep things quiet inside and outside of me, so I can concentrate. Then I don't play any music.

By the way, some children have asked me if I use the type of tissue paper with which you clean your nose. No. The type of tissue paper I use is the kind you can buy in an art supply or stationery store.



What kinds of flowers do you like? I am often asked "What is your favorite color?" My answer is that I like all colors; each color by itself is beautiful. But once you paint different colors next to each other, you have to carefully compose the right mix, otherwise you get clashing, disharmonious compositions. The same could be said about flowers. I like all flowers, but once you make a bouquet, you have to be careful. I must admit, however, I am partial to heather. It is such a small, modest, yet dazzling flower.

How many days did it take to illustrate *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You Hear?*
One weekend.

When is your birthday? June 25th.



What books are you working on now? In the year 2000, two books of mine are being published: in the spring, *Does A Kangaroo Have A Mother, Too?*, and for Christmas, *Dream Snow*.

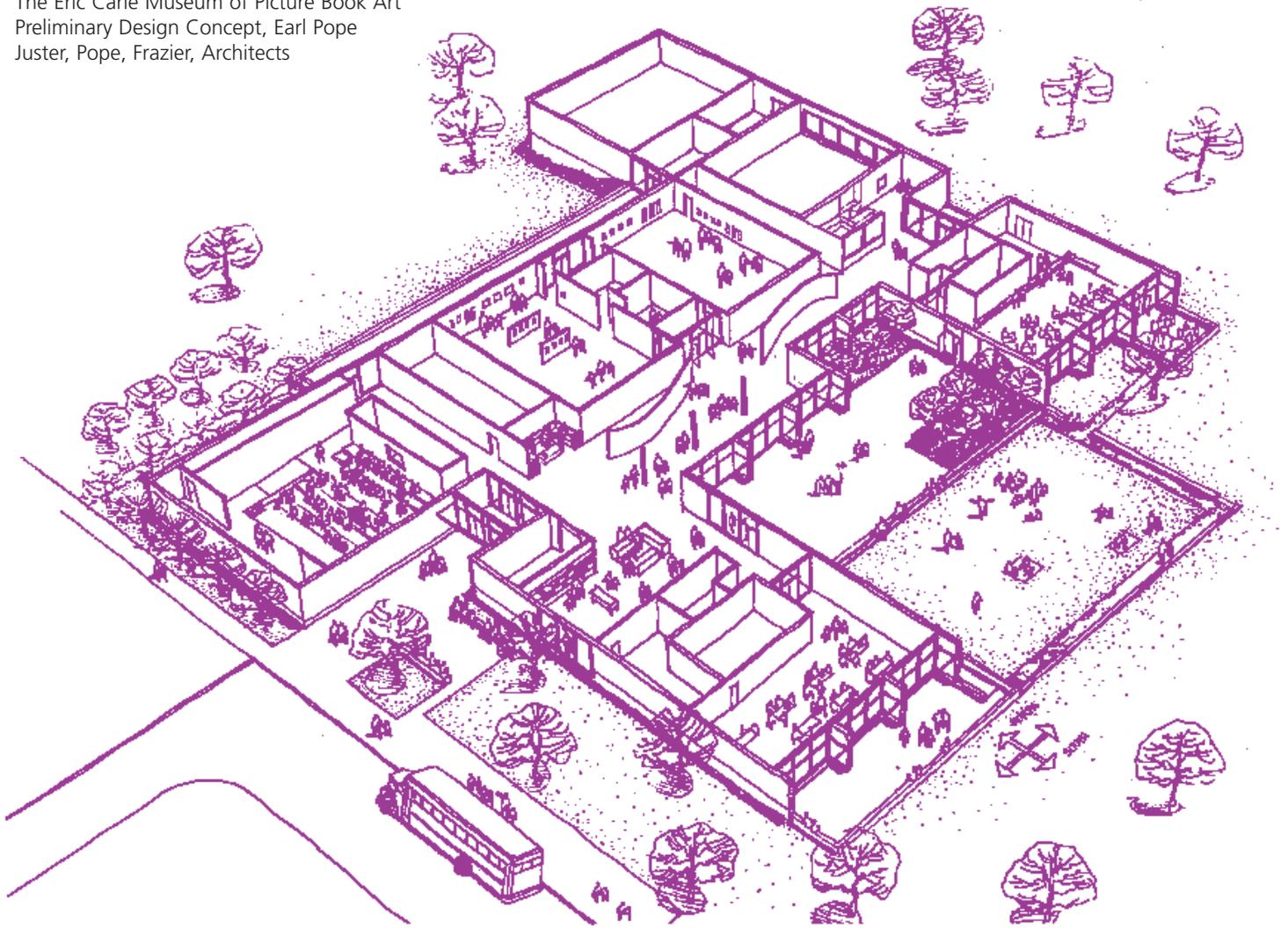
Let me tell you how *Dream Snow* happened. For over thirty years I told myself I would never do a Christmas book. But it seems when you repress an idea for too long it will burst forth one day anyway. In this case, the idea came to me one Saturday morning. I scribbled and scribbled, and on Monday morning, I sent *Dream Snow* to my editor. I hope you will like it. Now I am playing around with two other ideas, but that's all I can say, otherwise I will put a hex on them!

Many interesting things have happened since my last newsletter. For one thing, I have been asked to be on the advisory board of *Studio in a School*. This organization brings art to over 150 schools in New York City and the surrounding boroughs. Through this program, professional artists are able to work part time in the public schools, offering instruction to students of all ages, as well as to parents and teachers. I am proud to be on the same board as Maya Lin, who designed the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

I have seen some of the artwork that the children have created through the *Studio in a School* program, and I was so impressed by their work that I began to think back to my own art education and how it shaped me and brought much happiness to my life.

If you would like more information on *Studio in a School*, please write to them at 410 West 59th Street, New York, NY, 10019.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
Preliminary Design Concept, Earl Pope
Juster, Pope, Frazier, Architects



But the most exciting news of all is that my wife and I are in the planning stages of building The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. It has been our dream to build a museum for children and families, teachers and librarians, scholars and everyone interested in the art of the picture book – a museum to delight, entertain, surprise and educate. We established The Eric & Barbara Carle Foundation in 1995 to make that dream a reality and we expect to break ground for the Museum in the spring of 2001 and to open to the public in the fall of 2002.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art will be built in an apple orchard in Amherst, Massachusetts. It will house and exhibit my work (which I have kept over the years) as well as the work of many picture book artists from around the world. These exhibits will include the art of Mitsumasa Anno of Japan, Lisbeth Zwerger of Austria, Lucy Cousins of Great Britain, and many others. The work of Maurice Sendak will be shown at the Museum's opening.

The Museum will offer a variety of programs for people of all ages. There will be two main galleries which will feature changing exhibits, and an art studio for hands-on art-making. Storytelling, puppet shows, and lecture/demonstrations by visiting artists will be presented in the auditorium. And visitors will be able to explore a wide selection of picture books in many languages in the Museum's reading library. Last but not least, there will be a cafe for hungry visitors and a book and gift shop for browsing.

Now it is my turn to ask you some questions.

**Do you have any ideas about this museum?
What would you like to see at the Museum?**

What would you like to do there? Please send your questions and comments by filling out the guest book on the Museum web site at: www.picturebookart.org. This site will be periodically updated, so remember to visit often to keep up with our progress.

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Some free promotional materials about Eric Carle's books are available from the publishers. Write to:

Children's Marketing: Eric Carle Poster

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345 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

(send 10" x 13" SASE with \$.77 postage)

Book Club Marketing: Eric Carle Sticker Sheet

Scholastic Inc.

555 Broadway, New York, NY 10012

(send 9" x 12" SASE with \$.77 postage)

Let me tell you about another exciting event at the Eric Carle Studio:

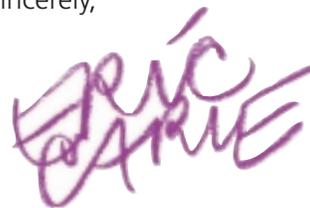
NHK, the Japanese public television broadcasting corporation, recently taped two segments for their series called *Superteachers*. Two camera crews, a director, a producer, all together a dozen people from Japan and a group of children from around Northampton came to my studio where I conducted a week-long workshop. We also visited The Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute where we looked at and discussed works by some of the Impressionist painters. Their interesting brush strokes inspire my own colored tissue papers which I paint and use to make my collages. We also took a walk in the country where we observed the flora and fauna and the colors in nature. A gray heron standing at the edge of a pond obliged the film crew, as it stood still for a while and then flew away. Towards the end of the week, the children prepared tissue papers and made their own picture books. The film crew, children and I all had a good time!

Earlier this year, in March 2000, I had a large exhibition of my work in Japan. My wife and I were invited and we spent three wonderful weeks in that beautiful and interesting country. Japanese children love my books.

The Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia has created beautiful black light puppet productions of two of my books: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *The Very Quiet Cricket*.

Designed specifically for young children, these shows will be presented across the country and the world. I have watched this production several times, and was overwhelmed by the beauty of the performance. If you have a chance to see this in your area, I recommend that you go see it with your friends and family. For more information on tour dates and locations, please visit my web site.

Hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Until next time.
Sincerely,



P.S. You can send me e-mail at fanclub@eric-carle.com and please visit my web site, www.eric-carle.com.