

Dear Friend,

First of all, I want to say thank you for all of your letters and e-mails and for visiting the Official Eric Carle web site at www.eric-carle.com where many of you contact me via our guest book. It is my pleasure to hear from all of you and I cherish your kind words and questions. One young reader recently wrote to say the tooth fairy brought her one of my books! It is always such a delight to hear everyone's news.

I have been enjoying my "retirement" in recent months and while my creative life is still full and busy, I have cut back on the number of appearances and book signings I do each year. While I am still "winding up my thinking cap" for new ideas for books and creative projects, I have been spending a portion of my time each day enjoying a quieter life near the ocean in the Florida Keys. My wife Bobbie and I are both happy to have time by the water in a warm climate where we observe manatees, pelicans and iguanas near our home. Sometimes I see an osprey sitting on my roof feeding on a fish that it has caught.

And yet, though quieter, life hasn't been uneventful. In 2006, I was honored that *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

was included in the Favorite Children's Book Animals postage stamp series in the USA and the UK.

There is also exciting news to share about the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and about a collection of games and products that are being created based on my books and characters. For more information about the Museum and new merchandise, please visit www.eric-carle.com or www.picturebookart.org.

In 2007, the fourth and final collaboration with Bill Martin Jr, *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?*, a manuscript Bill left with me before he passed away, was published on the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Brown Bear*. I hope you will enjoy our new Bear book and that Bill's words and my pictures will continue to delight readers of all ages for many years to come.

You might also be interested to know that all of my previous newsletters, *Caterpillar Express* # 1-5 are all posted on the Official Eric Carle web site where you will find lots more information (as well as a new photo and video gallery) about my books and my work and the creative process.

Now here are some answers to your excellent questions:

Why do you always put the sun in your books?

It is true that I often include the sun, and the moon, in my books and in a way I am trying to honor them by doing so. The sun and the moon have risen and set for billions of years and I feel it is the least I can do to put them in my books.



Also, the sun and moon provide us with so much: light and warmth for plants and animals. Sunrise marks the beginning of our day (in most places in the world) and the calm moon is a source of comfort in the night. Both in the sky and on the page of a book, the presence of the sun and the moon let us know whether it's day or night.

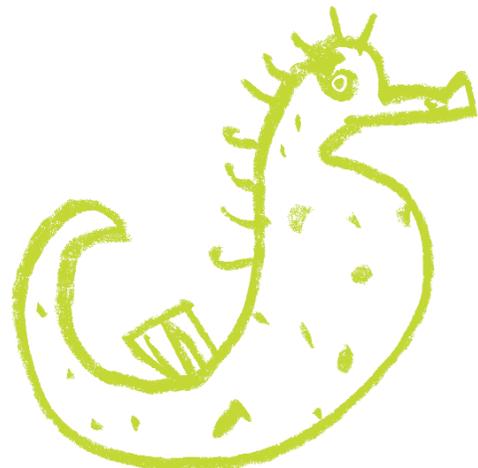
Why do you always paint a face on the sun and the moon? It seems to me that children do this instinctively and at heart I am still a child, so I do it too! Also, when you look at the moon you can almost see a face.



Do you ever make mistakes? Yes, I make mistakes, but it is all part of the creative process. Even "mistakes" are useful in some way. You can learn from them.

What gave you the idea for *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*? My book *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* grew out of workshops I used to do with school children when I would draw parts of the animals called out by children in the classroom, that is why I have dedicated it to all the children who have worked with me on this book.

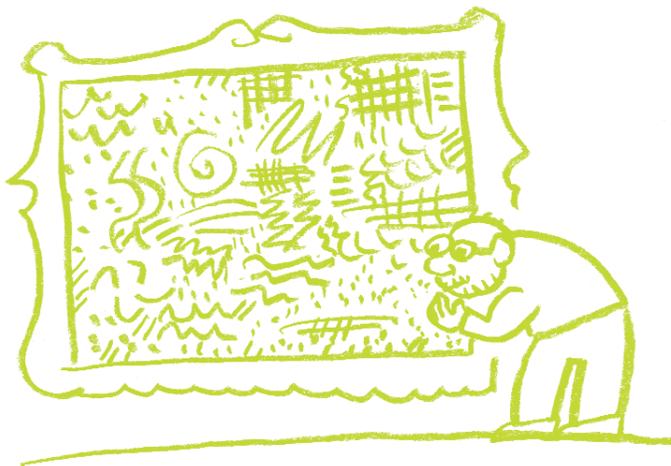
Why does *Mister Seahorse* look different from some of your other books and why isn't there an acetate sheet after Mr. Pipe? Some of you may have noticed that the colors in my book, *Mister Seahorse*, seem brighter and textured in a way that looks different from my other books. When I was creating *Mister Seahorse* I actually cut the shapes of the seahorses first and then painted them. (Usually I paint whole sheets of tissue paper first). Also, in *Mister Seahorse*, I crumbled the tissue paper first, then uncrumbled it, and only then painted it. That's how I achieved a certain effect (this is a little trade secret of mine that you may want to try).



One careful reader wrote and asked why there wasn't an acetate sheet after Mr. Pipe's page, breaking with a pattern established earlier in the book. While I was working on this book, I didn't imagine an acetate sheet after Mr. Pipe and so I didn't include one. And like many decisions I make along the way, this one was partially conscious and partially intuitive. In most of my books I tend to disrupt the pace and rhythm of the story toward the end to send a signal to the reader that the book is coming to a close.

Why do you use tissue paper? I had worked with it in art school and on design projects prior to becoming a children's book author and illustrator. I like the feel, thinness and partial transparency of tissue paper. Not all tissue papers are the same and I am always on the look out for new and better ones. "Better" meaning that it won't rip and that it is easy to handle.

Are you an Impressionist or Expressionist? This is a good question. In a way, I am both. When I create my papers, I am inspired by impressionist art and when I cut up my paper and create my pictures I am working more in the style of the Expressionists.



When I visit a museum, I catch myself studying with great curiosity and interest the brushstrokes of the artists, often focusing on a small section of a painting. I become intrigued by the textures created by the brush strokes or by the patterns in the grass or in the leaves or brickwork or water. Seen that way, a painting becomes an abstraction. I'm especially fascinated by the brushstrokes, dots and patterns of Impressionists such as Renoir, Seurat (all dots), Monet, Degas, and don't forget Van Gogh. Inspired, I return to my studio and make up more of my colorful and textured papers. And so, my tissue papers are created in the style similar to the Impressionists, and my completed collage illustrations are perhaps closer to being expressionistic.

Here's a simplified definition of each kind of artist:

Impressionists: Artists who portray general impressions of what they see rather than focusing on exact, true-to-life details.

Expressionists: Artists who express in an often abstract way and a sometimes exaggerated way, their inner selves or emotional experience.

Why isn't there a Deer in *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?* There is an illustration of a deer in this book (look on the back cover).

Why isn't there a sun in *Little Cloud* or *1,2,3 to the Zoo*? While it is true that I include a sun in most of my books, I chose not to include one in *Little Cloud* because I wanted to focus on clouds in this book. And because there are times when the clouds in the sky block out the sun. The same is somewhat true with my book *1,2,3 to the Zoo* in which my aim was to focus

the attention of the reader on the animals on the train rather than portraying the animals' environment or "background."

Have you ever created books for your own children? Did you write books about your own children? My children were older than the age of most of my readers by the time I started publishing books for children, however, you might be interested to know that I wrote and dedicated *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me* to my daughter Cirsten because she had asked me one night, when she saw the moon in the low sky, to get the moon for her.

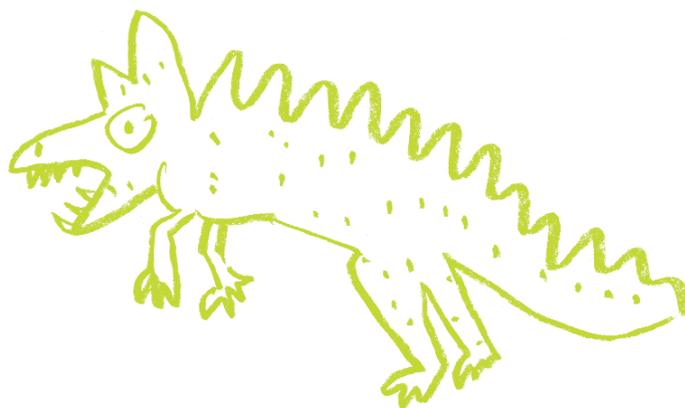
After that book was published, I wanted to dedicate a book to my son Rolf, and so I wrote *A House for Hermit Crab*.

How was "Papa" constructed? The fold-outs were constructed by a machine at the printer where the book was printed.

Why is there "C&R" in some of your books? These are the first letters in my daughter Cirsten and my son Rolf's names; they are now adults. A few times, I have even incorporated the names of friends into my books; these names will be hard to find; they are camouflaged.

C & R

Why don't you make a book about a dinosaur? Many readers send along wonderful suggestions for story ideas, some of which I have actually thought about doing (more often than not I have done more "thinking" than "doing"). But it is really a bit of a mystery why certain ideas take hold and evolve into actual books and why others remain unfinished in my "ideas box." Mostly though, I write about small creatures and there is usually a connection to my own experience and often to my own childhood.



Here are some helpful links from Eric's publishers for ordering books and more information about his books.

Penguin Young Readers Group

<http://us.penguin.com/static/html/aboutus/youngreaders/philomel.html>

HarperCollins Children's Books

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/harperchildrens/>

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/destination.cfm?tab=1&pid=351264>

Henry Holt Books for Young Readers

<http://www.henryholtchildrensbooks.com/>

Scholastic

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/search?query=Eric+Carle&x=39&y=13>

Kaisei-sha Publishing Co., Ltd. (in Japanese)

<http://www.kaiseisha.co.jp/ericcarle/index.html>

1967

Why does the List of Books on your web site begin in 1967 when there are earlier books that were illustrated by you? A few very early books that I illustrated include what is called "work for hire" or freelance illustration work and are mostly out of print. For this reason, I have not included them in my book list.

Are your books Fiction or Non-fiction? My books are both fiction and non-fiction. Many are about animals and insects and I include various facts about the particular bug or creature in my story. But the story itself grows out of my imagination and is a work of fiction. Also, some of my stories are non-fiction because they are based on my own personal experience.



Here's an example of how my book *Walter the Baker* is a combination of fiction and non-fiction:

- 1) My Grandmother told me the fairytale (fiction) of how the pretzel was invented. The character Anna in the book has my Grandmother's real name (non-fiction).
- 2) I had an Uncle named Walter who actually was a baker (non-fiction).
- 3) The castle and houses in the book are based on real villages in the area where I grew up in Germany (non-fiction).



What are you working on now? a) I spend a lot of time struggling with my new computer b) I was very involved in the renovation of our house in the Keys c) As I get older, I have slowed down some. And I am trying to "take it easy."