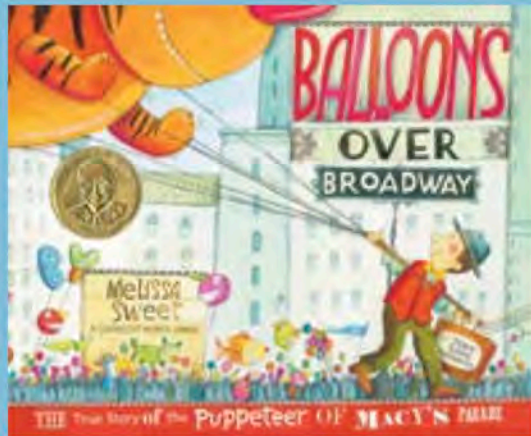
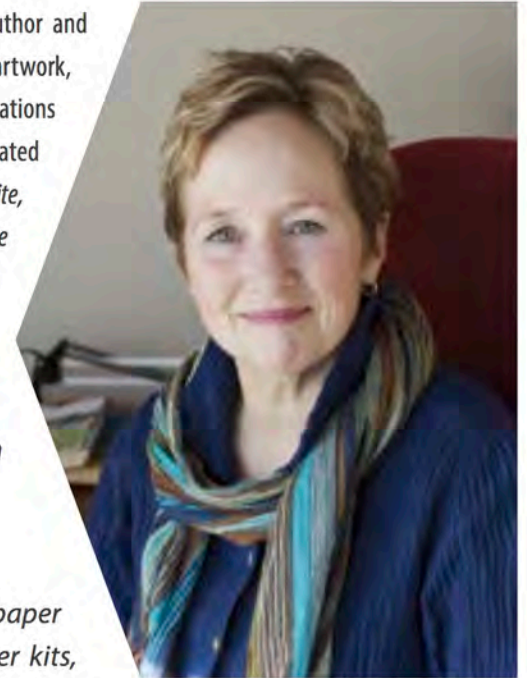


SOME WRITER!



BOOKS

MELISSA SWEET is an award-winning Maine author and illustrator known for her incredible collage artwork, playful use of color, and imaginative combinations of materials. She has authored and illustrated four books: *Some Writer! The Story of E.B. White*, *Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade*, *Tupelo Rides the Rails*, and *Carmine: A Little More Red*. She has illustrated over 100 books for children, and her artwork has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Madison Park Greetings*, and others.



About herself, Melissa says:

As a kid, I was always busy making paper dolls, playing with Paint by Number kits, Colorforms, a Spirograph. My first art lesson was watching Jon Gnagy on television in the 1960's and I've been drawing ever since. My ideas come from everywhere—the landscape, something I hear on the radio or from a book I'm reading. Even after working on all sorts of projects, I still find it's the designing, research and experimenting that is the most exciting part of making children's books. Above my drafting table there's a quote from the poet Mary Oliver: "To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work." That's good, because I often find myself taking walks, gardening, biking, but I'm taking it all in and it somehow shows up in my books.

SOME WRITER!



LET'S TALK

- Melissa Sweet used photographs, direct quotes, and images of real objects to bring *Some Writer!* to life. Which of these things helped you understand who E.B. White was as a child and as an adult?
- Melissa chose E.B. White as the subject of a biography because he's "some writer." Who would you choose, and why?
- What were E.B. White's two nicknames? When did people switch from calling him the first nickname to the second nickname?
- When En turned 12 years old, he received a letter from his father, who wrote, "When you are fretted by the small things of life remember...to look up and out on the great things of life and beholding them say - surely they are all mine." What do you think his father meant by that?
- En wrote in a journal every day for over twenty years. What else can you write in a journal besides the day's events?
- E.B. White used anthropomorphism (assigning a human trait to an animal or object) in many of his stories. What do you think of using animals as characters who talk? Can you think of any other books or stories that use this method to tell a story? What are some benefits to using this technique?
- Sometimes it's easy to forget that writers write more than books! Andy wrote in at least ten different forms of writing (letter, essay, etc.). As a class, can you come up with all ten? Brainstorm!
- In *The Elements of Style*, White & Strunk included a rule on exclamation points: "Do not attempt to emphasize simple statements by using a mark of exclamation." Do you think this is a good rule? As a class, discuss when you think exclamation points should and shouldn't be used. Scour *Some Writer!* with the eye of an editor - can you spot any "unnecessary" exclamation points?
- Professor Burr at Cornell University opened up Andy's mind to how important it was to live with the freedom to express ideas. Why do you think it's important to have that freedom? Do you feel you have that freedom?



LET'S CREATE

Melissa's rendition of the White Family Tree appears in the first few pages of the book. Using this tree as a model, create a tree that signifies anyone you would consider family, including parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, teachers, etc.

Choose an E.B. White essay or selection to read aloud such as, "[Once More to the Lake,](#)"¹ or "[The Death of a Pig.](#)"² Discuss the descriptions you hear and write down specific descriptive words that brought the essay to life. Draw a picture based on the words.

If there is a harbor located nearby, record the various kinds of boats and the variety of boat names. Ask the boats' owners why they chose those names for their boats. Write a poem that tells a story, using both your observations and research from interviews.

Make a [paper boat](#)³ and choose a special name for it.

Make a [shadow box](#)⁴ similar to those made by Melissa Sweet in the book: .

Reader's Theater – Use the prompts from this [site](#)⁵ to write dialogue, then act it out.

E.B. White lived on a farm and cared for many farm animals. Write a list of animals typically found on a New England farm, and draw a picture of a barnyard filled with your favorite animals from the list.

Did you know that E.B. White also wrote limericks? Research the characteristics of a limerick, and write a limerick from the point of view of a farm animal.

¹ http://wheretheclassroomends.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/White_OnceMoretotheLake1.pdf

² <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1948/01/death-pig/309203/>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgEsKtyMOXE>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDIVfKRC5Vo>

⁵ http://writingfix.com/Picture_Book_Prompts/IAMDog2.htm





MORE CREATING

Develop a profile of an animal you love, or one that you know nothing about. Describe it in as much detail as possible, in first or third person, using words to paint a full representation: habits, physical characteristics, what it eats, where it lives. Take a look at a [list of descriptive words](#)¹ to inspire you!

The *New Yorker* was created to depict life in New York City. With your class, create a magazine to depict life in your town or on your island.

Keep a journal for 5+ days by writing or drawing a picture for each day and end each day with a question. What do you wonder about? What do you wish for? Make a collage for your journal's cover.

Melissa often used E.B.'s words as the foundation for a drawing or collage (see examples on pages 13, 34, 52-53). Search for E.B. White quotes and, using one as a foundation, create a drawing or collage to accompany it.

When En's friend Freddie came to visit him in Snug Harbor one summer, he created a brochure of the place for Freddie because he wanted him to know and love the area as much as he did. Create your own brochure of your favorite place.

Draw a map of a real place that's familiar to you. Swap maps with a classmate or friend and see if they can follow your map for real, or in simulation, to understand the place and the path you've created.

[Info for students](#)² and [Info for educators](#)³

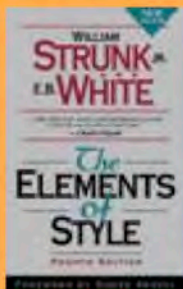
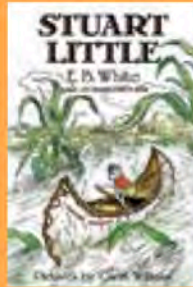
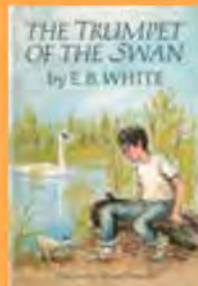
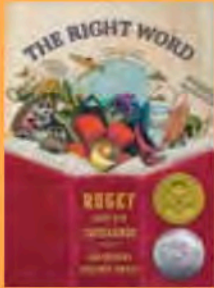


¹ <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/wordlist/adjectivesforpeople.shtml>

² <http://www.kidsgeo.com/geography-for-kids/0027-map-key-and-scale.php>

³ <http://nationalgeographic.org/education/map-skills-elementary-students/>

SOME WRITER!



TEXT-TO-TEXT CONNECTIONS

The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus, by Jen Bryant and illustrated by Melissa Sweet

A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams, by Jen Bryant and illustrated by Melissa Sweet

The Trumpet of the Swan, by E.B. White

Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White

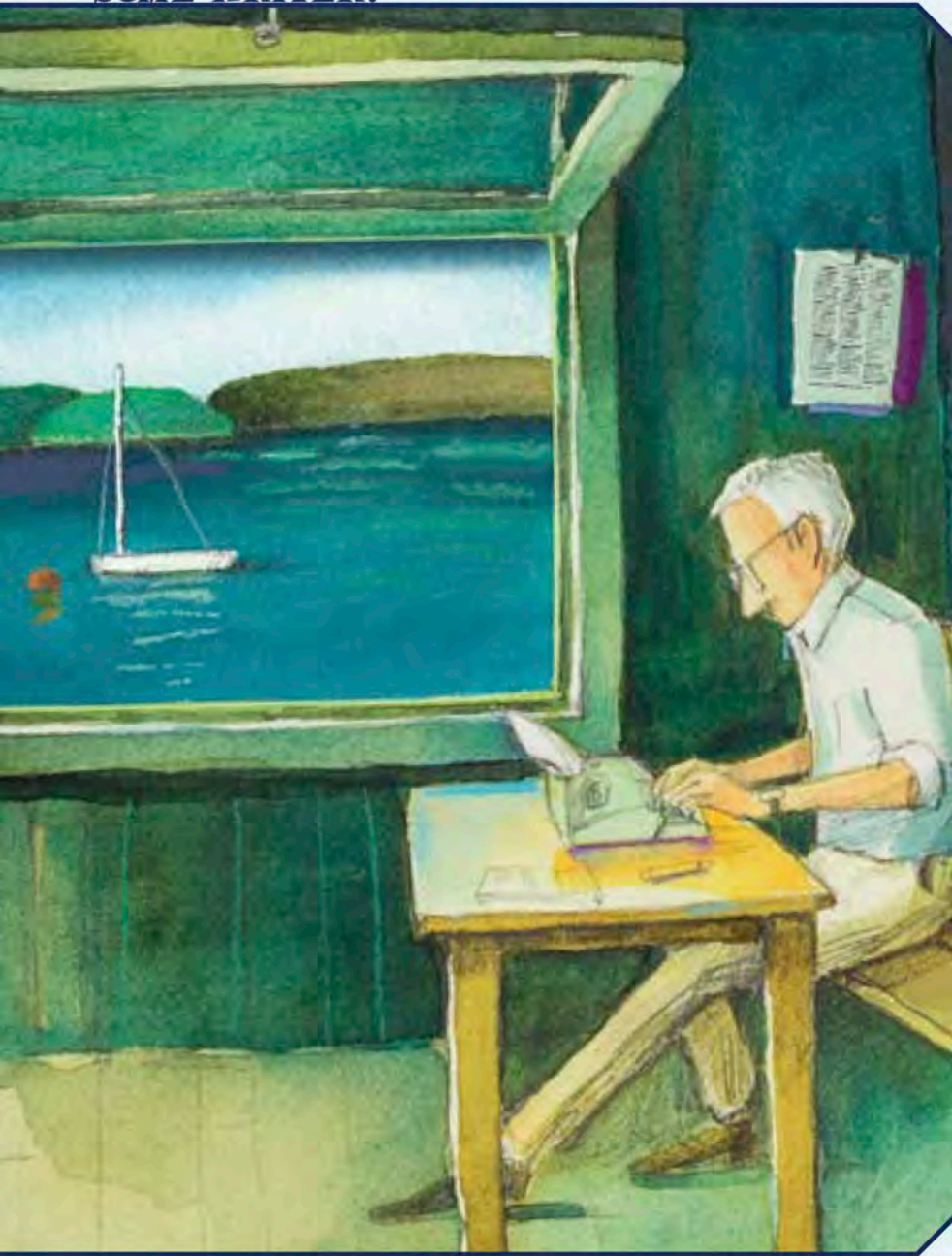
Stuart Little, by E.B. White

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk Jr. & E.B. White

The American Boy's Handy Book: What To Do and How To Do It, by Daniel Carter Beard

A Little Brother to the Bear and Other Animal Stories, by William J. Long

(When En was growing up, he read all the books by William J. Long "with a passionate interest.")



ONLINE CONNECTIONS

Melissa Sweet's website¹

A Maine Lobsterman² – Written and narrated by E.B. White

Book trailer for *Some Writer*³

*The New Yorker*⁴

Perspective is Everything:⁵ Understanding Literary Elements through E.B. White

The Way Life Should Be: The House of E.B. White⁶, written by Mira Ptacin of Peaks Island

E.B. White tries his hand at illustration⁷, and it lands on the cover of *The New Yorker*!

Melissa Sweet writes descriptively, and so did E.B. White. [How do you write descriptively](#)⁸?

E.B.'s love of boats became somewhat of a legacy. His son, Joel, started a boat-building business, *Brooklin Boat Yard*⁹, in 1960; Joel's son Steve now operates it.



1 <http://www.melissasweet.net>

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7a7acAeIE8>

3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viS83Re9HJk>

4 <http://www.newyorker.com>

5 <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/memoir/revise/pdfs/perspectiveis.pdf>

6 <http://writershouses.com/guest/the-way-life-should-be-the-house-of-e-b-white>

7 <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/04/23/e-b-white-new-yorker-cover-april-23-1932/>

8 <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-write-fiction-that-comes-alive-nalo-hopkinson>

9 <http://brooklinboatyard.com>

SOME WRITER!



TYPEWRITERS

Do you know what a typewriter is? What do you know about them? Have you ever used one? Do you know someone who has used one? Ask them what it feels like. How is it different from using a computer? Does it help you or them to think or write any differently?

Ten interesting facts about [typewriters](#)¹

[History of Typewriters](#)², Photo Galleries, Info on Typewriter Parts, and Writers & Their Typewriters

A short [video](#)³ of a young boy explaining how to use an old typewriter

[Kids react to typewriters](#)⁴

[A typewriter renaissance](#)⁵



¹ <http://tenrandomfacts.com/typewriter/>

² <http://site.xavier.edu/polit/typewriters/>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S923ovjh-B8>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfxRfkZdiAQ>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iX8Y4fWg0jw>





COMMON CORE STANDARDS

KINDERGARTEN: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

FIRST GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.7

Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

SECOND GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

THIRD GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

FOURTH GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

FIFTH GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.5

Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

SIXTH GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

SEVENTH GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.5

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

EIGHTH GRADE: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.