



Geisel Award Acceptance Speech

My Déjà Vu Euphoria

Tony Fucile



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Illustrator **Tony Fucile** is the winner of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for *Bink & Gollie*, written by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee.

In June 1969, the last week of my kindergarten year, our school announced that they were going to put on a year-end talent show. It was going to be a big deal; the entire school would be there in the outdoor amphitheater to watch it.

My two older sisters, Karen (fifth grade) and Nina (third grade) signed up. They were going to perform an accordion duet. They asked me if I would want to play the tambourine alongside them. I said, "Yes."

When my Mom informed my teacher of the plan, my teacher scoffed at the idea. She told my Mom that it would not happen. Tony will not do this. Her skepticism was justified. I hadn't muttered a single word the entire year. I was an extreme case of the "shy boy." I was also very stubborn and wouldn't play along with most activities, especially potentially embarrassing ones.

But when the day came to perform in front of the entire school, I was there, on stage, standing between my two sisters, banging the tambourine to a Palmer and Hughes polka.

Why did I do it?

I did it because my sisters asked me to. My sisters were heroes of mine. To me they were squeezebox masters. I was proud of them and absolutely elated to be part of the act.

I'll never forget that feeling of euphoria.

Forty-three years later, this past January, those very same wonderful feelings returned: *Bink & Gollie* had won the Geisel award.

To my heroes: Karen and Nina, Kate and Alison. Thank you for letting me tag along. &