



Geisel

AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES



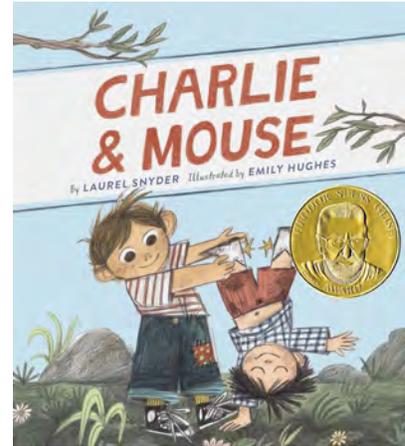
Author **Laurel Snyder** and illustrator **Emily Hughes** are the winners of the 2018 (Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award for *Charlie & Mouse* (Chronicle). Their acceptance remarks were delivered at the ALSC Awards Program on Monday, June 25, 2018, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

When you are a mom and an author at the same time, people often ask about your “work-life balance.” People want to know about your boundaries.

The truth is, I have no boundaries. For years, I wrote from under a pile of babies. There was always a peanut butter sandwich on my laptop. There was always a cheerio in my hair. I used to feel ashamed of how unprofessional I looked, but I don’t anymore. Because *Charlie and Mouse* could only have been born from my particular mess.

You see, what happened is that I was living with these funny little people named Mose and Lewis, and they kept saying things. They kept *doing* things. So one day I started writing down the things they said and did in tiny Facebook fragments. I wrote them as my mom-self, not my author-self. But then friends would comment, and say, “Hey, you should make that into a book!” Only I couldn’t figure out how to do that.

Then one day, an educator named Susannah Richards happened to be visiting Atlanta, and she came to my house to go for a walk. Of course, I



was mortified. Here was a professional colleague, witnessing my crazy life. But as we walked around my neighborhood, Susannah commented. “You should write about this place!” she said. “Nobody writes neighborhood books anymore.” Somehow, that was the key. I woke up at 3 a.m. and scribbled the first *Charlie and Mouse* stories.

Here is the thing: If I had clearer boundaries, I would not have invited Susannah to my home. I would not have been up in the middle of the night writing. If I had clearer boundaries, I would not post stories about

Baltimore native Laurel Snyder is the author of novels for children and picture books. In addition, she has written two poetry books and edited an anthology of nonfiction, *Half/Life: Jew-ish Tales from Interfaith Homes*. A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Snyder has published work in *The New York Times*, *Utne Reader*, *Salon*, and elsewhere. She teaches in the MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults program at Hamline University and in the creative writing department at Emory University. She lives in Atlanta with her family.

Author and illustrator Emily Hughes is a native Hawaiian, now living and working in the United Kingdom. Among her works are *Wild* (2013) and *The Little Gardener* (2015), both of which she wrote and illustrated. In 2015, Hughes was chosen to represent the UK in the prestigious Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB), one of the oldest international children’s book awards for illustrators and administered by UNESCO and the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.



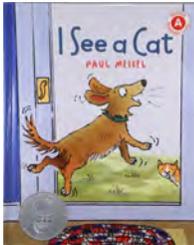


2018 GEISEL HONOR BOOKS

I See a Cat

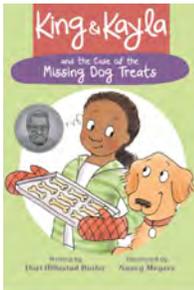
Paul Meisel

Illus. by the author
Holiday



*King & Kayla and the
Case of the Missing
Dog Treats*

Dori Hillestad Butler
Illus. by Nancy Meyers
Peachtree



*My Kite Is Stuck! And
Other Stories*

Salina Yoon

Illus. by the author
Bloomsbury



*Noodleheads See
the Future*

Tedd Arnold,

Martha Hamilton,
and Mitch Weiss

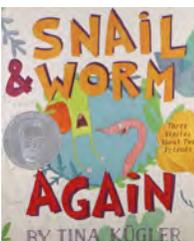
Illus. by Tedd
Arnold
Holiday



Snail & Worm Again

Tina Kügler

Illus. by the author
Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt



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my kids to Facebook. I would not do most of the things that feel authentic to me.

My children are part of my writing, always, because my writing is part of my daily life. I am *always* my writer-self and my mom-self in the same moment. *Every* moment. For me, it would feel false to set up walls, keep my life out of my work. So I want to thank absolutely everyone in my messy boundary-less life. Every parent who has collected my kids from school. All of my extended family members. My synagogue community, amazing neighbors, and my kids' teachers and friends.

I want to thank the women who keep me sane, Anne Ursu, Laura Ruby, Kate Messner, Olugbemisola Rhuday-Percovich, Linda Urban, Martha Brockenbrough, Tracey Baptiste, and Kelly Barnhill. Also Emma Snyder, Susan Gray, Rachel Zucker, Annie Crawford, Sonya Naumann, Terra McVoy, Elizabeth Lenhard, Lisa Brown, and Jenn Laughran.

I want to thank the teachers, librarians, booksellers, and other folks who have helped Charlie and Mouse find their readers. With special appreciation to the Geisel committee, who worked so hard this year, and read so many terrific books.

I want to thank my agent, Tina Du-bois, who is also one of my closest friends. I want to thank *all* the editors I've worked with, who have taught me so much. I want to thank Susannah for that walk.

Of course, I am hugely grateful to everyone at Chronicle. They really do "see things differently." And to Emily Hughes for her extraordinary art, which both captured the pictures in my head and transformed them into

something better.

I want to thank Melissa Manlove who is the sort of editor writers dream about. She looks for the heart of every story. She pushes me as a writer, but also as a person. I don't know how I got so lucky.

Last of all, I want to thank Chris, who shares my messy life daily. And Mose and Lewis, who *are* Charlie and Mouse. They've brought stories to my life and life to my stories. I could not possibly love them more.

-LAUREL

When I first said yes to illustrating *Charlie and Mouse* it was back in 2014. I was fresh out of my university town. I had decided to move to Brighton and did this move with trepidation that didn't leave me until I left. The room I rented had tall ceilings and a skylight, both lightly dusted with black mold. We were nine illegally housed tenants over an Asian-fusion restaurant named 'Rickshaw.'

My room had been robbed once, only to then be repaired with a padlock superglued to my door. On a Sunday morning, a flat screen TV was thrown out one of our windows—falling two floors into the street. In short, Charlie and Mouse's neighborhood couldn't have been more different than my own.

I said yes to *Charlie and Mouse* because I laughed, and at that time, those came few and far between. They had also stolen my laptop.

Charlie and Mouse is about Laurel's boys and Laurel's neighborhood. It is also about my childhood. I got to draw a street as I knew it, not the cur-



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rent one I was living on, which was constantly changing (I moved again shortly after that year); but the one from my youth—barefoot, messy, outside. In the end it was the only one I could recreate truthfully. What a lovely escape that was for me.

Laurel, I am amazed that our lives, though far away and purely digital, can feel so familiar to one another. Or more realistically, I am amazed that your writing has created a bridge between the two of us. It is as if your home in Georgia is only but a street away from mine in Hawaii—still within the parameters of a bicycle. I am sure we have now many more neighbors that recognize your sons and your stories as their own. Thank you for your funny, inclusive writing. It has been a continued joy to work on *Charlie and Mouse* with you.

Thank you, Chronicle Books, especially Melissa and Kristine. Thank you for your encouragement, patience, and guidance when I was constantly scatterbrained. It is a painful admission, but every yellow correction tab in that PDF was totally worth redoing and truly the better for it. Thank you for your unfaltering vision and diligence.

Thank you, Stephen Barr, my bril-

liant agent! Stephen, you've helped me navigate these waters from then till now, and the sailing has been only smooth since. You are the best email writer, your sense of humor and motivational ease keep me buoyant. How have I taken this nautical spin? I'm not too sure why you're getting so many sea-worthy lines. Maybe you are my lifesaver.

Thank you always to my fourth-grade-teacher mother, who truly loves books, whom I talk to most days. She is the one who reads the Mock Geisel forecasts, who I consult with ideas and frustrations, and who will probably look over this draft with me. I will deliberate on a word, and she will correct my dubious use of semicolons. Thank you, Mama.

I want to give you a big thank you, ALA, ALSC, Geisel committee. As a creative, it is hard to accept awards. I cannot speak for all, but I believe creatives are creative because they are contrary. When contrariness is embraced there is an identity crisis.

However, this award has made me feel differently. I know that with your seal of approval, this book will be widely accessible around this country and to its children. My natural opposition

falls short; there is nothing to oppose. It is a wonderful thing. What a beautiful opportunity you have given us. Thank you. That you have allowed this book, (which to me is) about my Hawaii community, a chance to be exposed means everything. I remember reading books where Santa came down chimneys we never had and kids jumped in piles of autumn leaves that wouldn't fall. It was the life I thought I was missing out on. As I have grown I now know what I had was equally beautiful.

I am grateful that children in my town will get a chance to see themselves.

To all those who have bolstered this book, I am thankful. I am sorry I cannot say this in person to you now.

Thank you, Hilo Public Library, where I got most of my education. Thank you, public libraries, all over this country. Thank you, librarians; you have been hugely instrumental in my life and outlook. I toast my paper receipt bookmark to you. Thank you, teachers. Lastly, a massive congratulations to all the Geisel recipients; how wonderful it is to have my name in your company.

-EMILY

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For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.