



# Geisel Award Acceptance Speech

## Lighting Up Kids' Eyes

Ethan Long

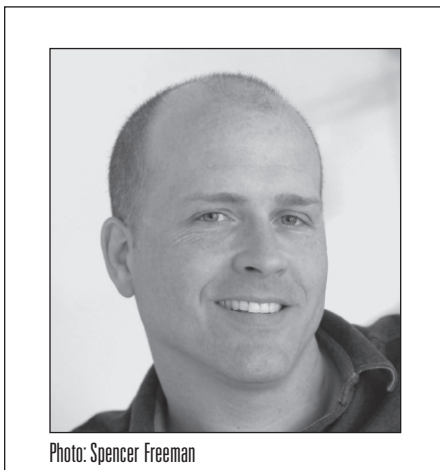


Photo: Spencer Freeman

**Ethan Long** is the winner of the 2013 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for *Up, Tall and High!*, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group. He delivered his acceptance speech at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.



As a child, I loved to draw and create things. I loved to look at books. My eyes lit up as I turned the pages of *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, and *The Cat in the Hat*. I remember the pacing, oddly enough, and how the rhythm of what I was reading kept me from being distracted by anything else.

Of course, I also grew up in the age of television and newspaper comics where my other favorite characters took me places I had never been. Charlie Brown, Mickey Mouse, and Beetle Bailey kept me laughing and transfixed, even when

I didn't have the maturity to get the joke.

Now as an old man of 45, I stumble every day into my small cave of a studio, and try to write books and create characters half as good as the ones I grew up with. I look for ways to write simple situations with funny characters and work hard to give readers something that they will remember long after they have put my books down. My hope is that the stories I work so tirelessly to create will connect, entertain, and of course, light up kids' eyes. Thank you, Geisel Committee, for this special award. ☺