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Irene Latham's

ADVENTURES IN INK

Imaginative Books for Kids since 2010

Hello, Friends!



It's time for some WILD PEACE!

Today is the release day for my latest picture book. Yay! This one comes to us from the good folks at [Roaring Brook Press](#) and has gorgeous illustrations by [Il Sung Na](#).

It's a spare 150 word poem about a girl from a big, busy family (like me!) who escapes into the forest (like I did as a kid and still do!), where each animal has something to teach her about peace. It's meditative and beautiful and makes a great quiet-time, let's-wonder-together read aloud.

"The poetic text, featuring one or two approximately rhyming lines on each page, presents a string of metaphors for peace...extolling the wonders and beauty of nature." - *Kirkus*

[Give Me Some WILD PEACE!](#)

INSIGHT

When I think about what has buoyed me over the past year and a half, it always comes back to time in nature. I'm so grateful to live in a woodsy, wild-peace place where geese, deer, and groundhogs are regular visitors. And when I'm not in the woods or on the lake, I'm often reading about those places. One author who has brought me nature time and again is Gary Paulsen, who died last week at age 82. [This podcast](#) of him talking about his memoir (published earlier this year) gives you a lovely glimpse of what a gift he was to the world, and to me personally.

I often share about how my writing practice and my cello practice go hand in hand, how one informs—and strengthens—the other. Here's a beautiful episode about that very thing over at the [The Mind Over Finger](#) podcast. (Also, words matter. Be listening for another word for "habit" that I have completely adopted.)

In other news, I've learned this fall that MG isn't just for Middle Grade; it's also for Master Gardener! I'm learning so much about plants and gardening through this course. New green-growing-garden metaphors are climbing my neural pathways like kudzu on power poles. (See?) The best part, though, is joining with new friends to serve the community.

Those who know me know eating good food makes me happy (and not eating good food makes me grumpy)! Here's a great article on [where to eat in Alabama](#). Bon appetite!

Something else that makes me happy is good books! I've read so many of them lately... For an old-fashioned love story with an Appalachian setting that's also a love letter to poetry, don't miss this book: [In the Wild Light by Jeff Zentner](#). Gorgeous!

INSPIRATION

Probably the question I am most often asked when a new book is released is: "What inspires you?" There are many things! Books, people, nature, art, animals, museums, my childhood, my dreams, Paul and our beautiful (grown) children...and YOU!

WILD PEACE was inspired by the oft-shared poem "[The Peace of Wild Things](#)" by Wendell Berry.

The book started out as a poetry collection, in which I wrote a poem for each animal. An editor suggested it might work better as one long poem, so I compressed each animal's contribution to a single line. And then it promptly found a publishing home!

You can read the original poems in this FREE printable "Poem-Friends for WILD PEACE" zine I created (with a little help from my sweet friend Tabatha). [Click here to download](#).

For more animal inspiration, visit these links:

[A List of 25 Best Animal LIVE Cams](#)

[50 Free Forest Animal Craft Activities](#)

[A Wild Peace Book list for going into the woods with kids](#)

IMAGINATION

So much (all?) of my writing is about imagination. I love thinking and dreaming and problem-solving. Imagination is the core of empathy, too—that's one of my main motivations for writing at all: to discover what it's like to be someone else, live different lives. All those things I didn't choose (dancer! veterinarian! park ranger!), I get to "be" in my books. And sometimes, like with [AFRICAN TOWN](#), my forthcoming book with [Charles Waters](#), I get to imagine my way into history.

Coming January 4, 2022, [AFRICAN TOWN](#) is based on the true story of the last slave ship *Clotilda* and the 110 captives who landed in 1860 Mobile, Alabama. Charles and I tell the story in 14 voices, and while it was incredibly difficult to enter the terror and brutality of some parts of the story, it was an honor to imagine the shipmates' love, strength, and creativity as they not only survived, but thrived, eventually creating the Africatown community that still exists to this day. [Pre-order your copy today!](#)

Meanwhile, here's a *Harvard Magazine* review of a book on my nightstand that's all about [empathy, imagination, and animals](#). Win win win!

Thank you so much for reading this newsletter! It means so much that you've chosen to share your time with me today. **If you know someone you think might benefit from this newsletter, please forward it to them!** I will leave you with a quote from *The Beatryce Prophecy* by Kate DiCamillo: "What does, then, change the world?...Love, and also stories."
YES!

Love,
Irene

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