



BETHANIE DEENEY MURGUIA

Author and Illustrator

Contact: 415-235-0509

Website: aquapup.com

Blog: bethaniemurguia.blogspot.com

BIOGRAPHY

Bethanie Deeney Murguia graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Rochester with a BA in psychology and fine art. She continued her study at the School of Visual Arts in NY where she received her MFA in illustration. She was awarded a merit scholarship after completing her first year of the program. While in New York, she worked as an art director for Hearst Magazines.

Since relocating to the Bay Area, she has continued to work as an art director for design and marketing firms. Bethanie has created illustrations for toy packaging and various children's publications, including *Ladybug* and *My Big Backyard* (National Wildlife Federation). Her paintings and design work have been honored with numerous awards.

Buglette the Messy Sleeper (Random House, 2011) was Bethanie's debut publication as an author and illustrator. *Zoe Gets Ready* will be published by Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic) in 2012. She is currently at work on another Zoe book (Scholastic, 2013), a companion to *Buglette* (Knopf, 2013), and a picture book for Candlewick Press (2014).

BOOK SYNOPSIS: ZOE GETS READY

Each day is full of possibilities, and Zoe wants to be ready for everything this one might bring. But that makes getting dressed really, really hard! If it's a twirling day, she'll need to wear the purple skirt. But if it's a cartwheeling day, she'll want the polka-dot tights. Or it might be a hiding day, perfect for the flower crown that will help her blend into the garden . . . or a flying day, which demands butterfly wings! As the clothes pile up and Mama tells her it's time to go, there's only one way Zoe can be sure she's prepared for all the adventures ahead -- a solution that will have parents laughing in recognition and kids nodding in satisfaction. *Zoe Gets Ready* is perfect for all those little girls who wouldn't have things any other way.

BOOK SYNOPSIS: BUGLETTE THE MESSY SLEEPER

Buglette is a tidy little bug, except when she's asleep. Her quirky sleeping habits annoy her family until her big dreams save the day (or night, as the case may be). This tiny heroine is a spirited and imaginative character. Whimsical illustrations bring the details of young Buglette's world to life in this simple and original tale about messy sleeping.

INTERVIEW

How did the idea for *Buglette* originate?

I suppose it's not surprising that I wrote a book about sleep at the point in my life when I was getting the least. I was a slightly delirious, sleep-deprived Mama with a newborn and feisty 3-year old when my friend asked me to take a writing workshop. I was too tired to say no. As I started to mull over ideas, I was struck by the contrast between my swaddled newborn who slept so calmly and my 3-year old who thrashed from one end of her bed to the other every night. I began to suspect that my 3-year old was having BIG dreams. And the story of Buglette was born.

How did the idea for *Zoe Gets Ready* originate?

This book was inspired by the ways in which the children around me, my daughters included, express themselves through their clothing. Some like to wear multiple pairs of underwear, others insist that skirts are the finishing touch for every outfit. They take great joy in creating new combinations.

For many kids, getting dressed is about anticipating the day's activities and possibilities. I think there is a need for a dress up book that goes beyond predefined characters and dressing to look a certain way. *Zoe Gets Ready* is about a girl who dresses to take full advantage of all that the world has to offer.

Tell us a few things people should know about you. I have a nickname for almost everything. I love pranks. I rode my bike over 30,000 miles in 3 years (yes, that was

before I had kids). I love brainteasers. I live in a town that makes me feel like I'm on vacation every day.

What is your favorite bike ride? Early morning rides through the Marin Headlands with the coyotes, bobcats, countless bunnies and even the occasional mountain lion are amazing.

Tell us about your family. I am the mother of two girls and a fifty-pound lap dog. My husband and I are both art directors. As such, our lives are filled with art, creativity and a whole lot of opinions.

Who are your favorite illustrators? The list is long and always evolving, but two that I am consistently inspired by are Jon Muth and Lisbeth Zwerger. I also adore Ian Falconer and that little pig Olivia – so much of the story and the humor are in those seemingly simple drawings.

What medium(s) do you use? Right now, I am working with ink and watercolor. Watercolor has been a constant over the years. It is so fresh and unpredictable that it always feels new to me. You can't make watercolor do something against its will. However, with time (lots of time), I've begun to learn about the colors that I use, how they mix, how they react with water and how they dry. It is always trial and error and I do multiples of most illustrations. The quest for the perfect watercolor painting continues.

How do you pronounce your last name? mer GEE ya (with a hard "G" as in "glee"). I think having three vowels in a row really throws people. It is rarely pronounced correctly. On the upside, it helps me to weed out telemarketers very quickly. There is a small town in Spanish Basque country named Murguia.

How do you come up with your ideas? I am inspired by my family and the small moments in each day that make me stop and appreciate what it means to be a child. At the same time, I think my subconscious brings my own issues into the mix. As I mentioned earlier, I don't think it's a coincidence that I wrote two books about sleeping when I was being woken up four times a night by an infant.

Tell us something about your past that most people probably wouldn't guess. In high school, I was on the math team. I broke out in a cold sweat before meets but generally loved the competition. I went on to an engineering program and four semesters of calculus before finally realizing that it wasn't my calling.

What would surprise your 16-year old self about the person you are now? That I am a mom. That I ADORE being a mom. That I sound like my mother when I'm a mom. That I don't have a perm, blue eye shadow or a pair of jordache jeans.

What wouldn't surprise your 16-year old self about the person you are now? That I live in California next to the ocean.

Please share a childhood memory. I grew up in snowy Western New York. After the biggest snowstorms, the plow would push a huge mound of snow to the bottom of our very long driveway. It was a mountain to a young kid – big enough for tunnels, forts and multiple sledding courses. My friends and I spent entire days on the “mountain”.

If you had a superpower, what would it be? Finding trap doors and secret hatches. I grew up in a house that was built in 1849. It was full of strange little doors and panels in the floors that didn’t open. I was captivated. I spent hours trying to convince my parents to rip up the floors and the walls, certain that there was treasure hidden away. Now that I am an adult and live in my own very tiny cottage, I have dreams about finding secret hatches that lead to expansive spaces.

What is your favorite sandwich? My favorite California sandwich: Almond butter and honey on sprouted grain bread. My favorite New York sandwich: chive cream cheese on an untoasted (MUST be untoasted) raisin bagel.

If you were an animal, what would you be and why? A coyote. On many occasions, I’ve come eye-to-eye with coyotes—during early morning bikes rides and even walks in downtown Sausalito. These encounters generally coincide with momentous times in my life so I can’t help but feel that I am somehow connected to coyotes. In folklore, the coyote is often portrayed as creative and clever with a sense of humor. (Also wily and crafty but those words couldn’t possibly apply to me. *Grin*)

What is your favorite thing about being an author/illustrator? When I’m developing an idea, I love to work back and forth between words and images. If I get stuck while I’m writing, I’ll try to figure it out visually. And vice versa. I am also a graphic designer; I find it very gratifying to visualize how the words and images come together on the page.

What did you want to be when you grew up? An actress, an architect, a scientist, a diver, a ballerina, a gymnast, a calligrapher, a city dweller, a mountaintop dweller, a treehouse dweller. And, of course, I wanted to make books.

Bonus: If you owned a horse, what would you name it? Guadalupe