



Big little
Book
award

Proiti Roy

Illustrator

Winner 2017



Great illustrations is all about
team work

What role can awards play in the children's literature sector?

Encouragement, motivation, inspiration and appreciation... all the way and for the so many people involved.

How did you become a children's illustrator?

As a child, I loved to read books, sometimes it was mostly 'looking' rather than 'reading' the book. The pictures in the books took me inside the stories and I would become a part of it. I reacted and related to the pictures in the books very intimately. After graduating in fine arts, and dabbling with all kinds of projects and assignments in advertising and freelancing, I

started to teach children art and craft. I was drawn into the world of a child's imagination and fantasy in an effortless way because I was spending all my time with them and felt very comfortable being there with them. It didn't take me very long to realise that illustrating for children was something I would really like to do. I got all the support and encouragement one could ask for at home and from family and friends. I was also very fortunate to get the opportunity to work for some of the finest children's book publishers in India and they encouraged me in many ways.

What was the first story/illustration you did for children?

If I remember right, it was a book of European fairy tales translated in Bangla, published in Bangladesh in the late 80s. I had done some black and white drawings. I wish I could remember the publisher's name.

Who are some of your favourite illustrators and why?

Sukumar Roy is one of my all-time favourites. His black and white drawings were outrageously brilliant. He was a pioneer, a legend in Indian children's literature. In the early 20th century, he was way ahead of his time. I also enjoy the work of Christopher Corr. His brilliant use of colours and details are breath-taking. Much travelled, he observed the world around him with humour and sensitivity. Then there is Chris Van Allsburg. This writer-illustrator has been a big influence. I admire the quiet drama he creates in his illustrations with beautiful detailed treatments. There's great humour in the wonderful drawings of Wolf Erlbruch and I love the way he uses space and objects in his compositions. Lane Smith's work is strange and weird at its best! What can I say? You have to just look at his illustrations and you'll know what I mean. Then there is Jon Klassen – a minimalist with powerful sense of visual language... a brilliant storyteller. And finally Anna Raff - her monotone works have always delighted me. Drawing animals in the most simple yet skilled way, with so much character and humour. These are just to name a few... there are so many whose work I love.

How can new talent be encouraged in this field?

The young and talented of today's world are adventurous and like to experiment, using techniques and skills that are varied. To give them the freedom to explore and experiment would be a huge encouragement and also good remuneration - that's something practical and necessary. They wouldn't need to look elsewhere if they are happy and satisfied doing what they are doing.

Is there any type of project you haven't done yet, but dream of doing?

Design stationary in unique ways and market the products myself so that a big share can go to animal welfare causes.

If you had a piece of advice for aspiring illustrators or authors, what would it be?

Patience... have lots of it. And though I'm not the best person to give this piece of advice, deadlines... they should be taken seriously. And try to remember that an illustrator's job is based on good team work... with the publishers, editors and sometimes the authors and then most importantly, keep the young readers in your mind... always!

