

## **Eileen Meyer Biography**

I grew up in Waukegan, Illinois, with my parents, three sisters and a brother. We lived in a little house with a big backyard. Every year my dad made an ice skating rink for all the neighborhood kids to use. We tried out our best figure skating moves and played “Crack the Whip.” Besides ice skating, I loved playing board games and hanging out with my family. But most of all, I loved reading books. My favorite authors included Beverly Cleary (Ramona the Pest and more), Donald Sobol (Encyclopedia Brown series), and Jean Craighead George (My Side of the Mountain).

My fifth grade teacher, Mr. Ozee, encouraged me to write an Arbor Day essay and enter it in a community-wide contest. I wrote about the beauty of forests and how I treasured Joyce Kilmer’s famous poem, *Trees*, which my father had read aloud to me many times. I couldn’t believe when I actually WON the contest! From that moment on, I thought of myself as a writer. (Also, it was pretty cool to leave school mid-day and plant a tree at a local park in honor of Arbor Day.) Mr. Ozee told me to keep writing stories and poems, and I did.

After earning a business degree in college, I worked for a few technology companies. I racked up lots of frequent flyer miles and worked with clients all over the country. (My favorite trips were to Honolulu!) I got married and had three sons. And then I took them to the library and we lugged home huge stacks of books to read aloud. . . and that’s when I fell in love with children’s books all over again. And so I decided to write my own stories and poems for children. First, I worked on my craft by taking classes and joining a writing group. Next, I began submitting my poems to children’s magazines. Eventually, I sold my first nonfiction book. And that’s how my writing career began.

These days, I like getting young readers excited about history and uncovering new, true stories to share. I’m an active member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and I’ve volunteered over the years. When I’m not writing or visiting schools, you can find me cheering on my beloved Cubbies or walking the beach. My husband and I have three grown sons; favorite times are those spent with family and friends. Our family splits time between the great states of Illinois and Florida.