

# FOR ALL OUR VOICES

Issue No. 5

November 2010

## In This Issue

News

Poem

Writing Exercise

Quotations

## Quick Links

[My website](#)



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Fall: harvest time! Usually we think of gathering in what we've grown this year. But books are not beets, and some projects require many earth-turns, many seasons before they reach fruition. This was the case with *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*, illustrated by Stephanie Anderson. It grew out of an all-women build I was part of in 2000.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Stephanie and I met (for the first time) in New York to attend the ceremony where our book was given a Jane Addams Honor Award.



In this photo, left to right, you see me, Stephanie, Julie Olsen Edwards (member of the awards committee and Tillie Olsen's daughter) and Linda Belle, Executive Director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which gives the award.

Every fall in church we used to sing "We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves." At the Jane Addams ceremony our sheaves were the pages of books, veined with heroic stories, to which each committee member, author, and illustrator gave homage. We were all close to tears when Elizabeth Partridge's voice broke, speaking of the people she interviewed for *Marching to Freedom: Walk Together Children and Don't You Grow Weary*. These folks, in their fifties now, had marched for voting rights when they were too young to vote. They'd been beaten, tear-gassed, jailed. "I could never do what they did," Elizabeth Partridge said. "I could never be that brave. But I could write the book."

Yes!! We can only do our part, but that part matters. I couldn't be Diane, who led the crew to build Sharonda's house in *Home Sweet Home*. I am your ten-thumb type. But I could paint and carry things. I could listen. And I could write the book.

Now it's in the hands of librarians, teachers, parents, and booksellers, who all do their part to get it to kids. We're all in a big circle to create books for and share books with kids. I couldn't do your part, Dear Reader, but I thank you for it.

NEWS

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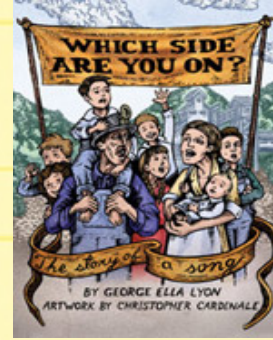
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### picture books

*You and Me and Home Sweet Home* was chosen as one of the 2010 Bank Street Best Books of the Year.

#### Due out in 2011:

*All the Water in the World*, illustrated by Katherine Tillotson and [Which Side Are You On? The Story of a Song](#), illustrated by Christopher Cardinale.



### fiction

With the help of Margaret Ferguson at Farrar, Straus & Giroux I'm making the final revisions of *Holding On to Zoe*, which is due out in 2012, as you read this.

### poetry

With the help of a fellowship to the [Hambidge Center for the Arts](#) in July, *Many-Storied House* is finally built. Now I have to be a realtor...

## POEM

*You and Me and Home Sweet Home* was close to publication when I realized that one reason helping build Sharonda's house moved me so much was that my grandfather built the house I grew up in. "Provenance" is the first poem in *Many-Storied House*.

### PROVENANCE

They paid Papaw for the house,  
of course. It wasn't a gift. \$200  
a month, my mother told me. I did  
ask about that. But did they move in  
in July, 1941, as soon as they got  
home from honeymooning at Niagara  
Falls? How long did it take Papaw  
to build it? When did they get  
engaged? Did they buy the land  
from the McPherson's next door  
or did Papaw already own it?  
Here I stand, at the beginning,  
with more questions than  
answers.

What I know is Papaw  
built the house I grew up in,  
at Rio Vista, which is down below  
Loyall, four miles from Harlan,  
the county seat. It's on First  
Street, #108, I found out when  
we sold it. Fourth house  
on the right, two-story,  
reddish brown and white.  
You can't miss it.

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## WRITING EXERCISE

Write what you know and what you don't know about something that's important to you. You might list facts and questions and then see how they speak to each other.

## QUOTATIONS recently copied into my journal

"Build thee more stately mansions. O my soul..." -- Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily." -- Dorothy Day

"Not only is another world possible, she is on her way.  
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." -- Arundhati Roy

I hope this finds you all well and flourishing. Happy Holidays!

George Ella Lyon