



# Geisel AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES

## Geisel Medal Acceptance Remarks

by Anna Kang

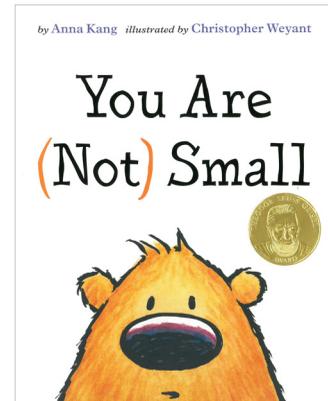
**T**hank you, American Library Association, for this wonderful award. It is a huge honor just to be mentioned in the same breath as Cynthia Rylant and Mo Willems.

I want to thank Kevin Delecki and the members of the 2015 Theodor Seuss Geisel Committee. Thank you for selecting our book, and for calling us a few minutes before kick-off on Super Bowl Sunday.

As the committee will attest, it took several minutes for me to believe it was not a sales call or a practical joke, and when the news finally sunk in, I was overwhelmed. “Why is Mommy screaming??” my daughter anxiously wondered. My older daughter reassured her that it was good news. Yes, it was the best news. Thank you for giving me such an enormous gift.

Today happens to be Chris and my wedding anniversary. What a way to celebrate thirteen years of marriage and twenty years of friendship. I’m not sure how we’re going to top this next year.

I was extremely lucky that the illustrator of my first picture book happened to be my lovely and talented husband with whom I could bounce off ideas. I knew that most authors



didn’t have such a luxury, and Chris had to “gently” remind me of this fact. More than once. Not surprisingly, Chris elevated my work, making it far better than I could have imagined. He and I joke that we now have three kids: two are human and one is a book. Thank you, Chris, for giving me three beautiful children.

As a writer, ideas come from all sorts of places, but the idea for *You Are (Not) Small* came from my experience growing up as a minority. Here in the U.S., I’m considered “small” or “petite.” And, among other things, it’s extremely challenging to find clothes that fit. I spend a lot of time at the tailor.

When I was nine years old, my mother started sending me to Korea for the summer because she was worried I was becoming “too American.”



**Anna Kang and Christopher Weyant** are the winners of the 2015 (Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award for *You Are (Not) Small* (Two Lions). Their acceptance remarks were delivered at the ALSC Book and Media Awards Program on Monday, June 29, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.

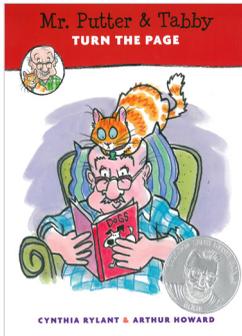


Anna Kang, a native New Yorker, graduated with honors from Tufts University with a degree in International Relations and Asian Studies. She went on to work as a research associate at the Council on Foreign Relations, a foreign policy think tank in Manhattan. Anna returned to school and received an M.F.A. from University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts. While at USC, she won a scholarship for excellence in screenwriting. *You Are (Not) Small* is her first children’s book.

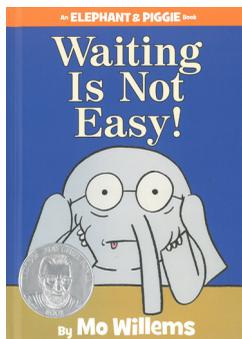
**FUN FACT:** Anna participated in the Sundance Institute’s prestigious Screenwriters Lab with her first feature script, *The Lost Tribe of Long Island*, and also was selected to participate in Film Independent’s Screenwriters Lab and Directors Lab.



## 2015 GEISEL HONOR BOOKS



**Mr. Putter & Tabby Turn the Page.**  
Rylant, Cynthia.  
Illus. by Arthur Howard.  
Houghton



**Waiting Is Not Easy!**  
Willems, Mo.  
Illus. by the author.  
Disney/Hyperion

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I remember shopping with my aunt and discovering racks and racks of clothes that were exactly my size in every store we entered, as if they were custom-made specifically for me. These clothes weren't in a special "petite" section or in a younger, more "junior" section. They were just clothes.

For the first time in my life, my size—along with my skin color, hair, and eyes—was unremarkable. Everywhere I looked, I saw my image reflected back at me, on billboards, on TV, and in books. As a child, this was a powerful feeling. I saw that I was not strange or in desperate need of tailoring. I was just me. And I belonged to this world as much as the next person.

This was a huge revelation for me: that our perspective is subjective and not necessarily the whole truth. It's the message I hope children will take away from reading our book.

### Geisel Medal Acceptance Remarks by Christopher Weyant

**T**hank you, American Library Association, and thank you, Geisel Committee. I am truly honored by this award.

When the Geisel Award was announced, I was often asked what the award meant to me. Answering this question, I was reminded of when my wife and I were pregnant, or rather, when she was pregnant,

Thank you, Holly McGhee, our agent, our mentor, and our friend. This book, and everything good that has come out of it, would not have been possible without you. Thank you for believing in us, and for your love.

I also want to thank our editors, Margery Cuyler and Kelsey Skea, for their wisdom and their kindness, and all the amazing people at Two Lions who helped bring our third child into this world with so much care and devotion.

Finally, thank you to my parents and my brother for their constant support, and to my daughters, Kate and Lily, who, like their father, elevate my work and my life, every day.

Thank you.

with our first daughter. Family and friends loved to talk to us about an extraordinary life moment that was coming—the moment when your child begins to walk. Excitedly they'd say, "Just wait until the baby starts to walk!" Or, "Has she taken her first steps?" "Oh, the baby's first steps! It's SO amazing!" I couldn't wait for this heralded milestone to arrive. And then one day, it did. My daughter took her very first steps

Christopher Weyant, a native of New Jersey, graduated from Gettysburg College with a B.A. in Political Science and Economics and planned to become a lawyer. Instead, he became a cartoonist. His cartoons regularly appear in *The New Yorker*, are syndicated worldwide, and have been highlighted on *The Today Show*, *Meet the Press*, and CNN. *You Are (Not) Small* is Christopher's first illustrated children's book. His second, *That Is (Not) Mine*, also written by his wife, Anna Kang, is due out this fall.

**FUN FACT:** In 2014, the Nieman Fellowship for Journalism at Harvard University selected Weyant to be a Nieman Fellow, only the second cartoonist to receive that honor in Nieman Foundation's seventy-five year history.



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and as my wife filmed it, I thought... "Eh?" Honestly, it looked like the beginning of a lot more work for me and Anna.

What I didn't know then was that I would get to experience that kind of big, joyous moment. But for me, it would happen a few years later. One night, as we got ready for bed, my daughter held one of our favorite picture books and started to read for the first time. Watching her chubby finger hop from word to word, trailing down a sentence and listening to her as she sat on the floor of her room, softly reading in her own voice and with her own intonation; it was profound. I consider it one of the most transcendent moments of my life.

Whether she was reading a street sign, or a menu, or a book, she was now more a part of our world, the world of literacy. And with that, I knew, for the first time, that my girls would be OK. Because reading doesn't just open the doors to a world of imagination, but also to a life of knowledge and education. Through books, she would gain greater empathy and compassion towards others. And with the thousands upon thousands of

unforgettable characters in great literature, I knew she would never be alone.

This I owe to books; these simple, beautiful picture books that started all of us down this wonderful path. And so, to know that a book I helped create may someday sit on a child's bookshelf next to a Cynthia Rylant or an Arthur Howard or a Mo Willems, that in some small way may help bring a new reader into our world, is more than I could ever have hoped for.

When people ask what the Geisel Award means to me, I say, as an artist and as a father, I can think of no higher honor.

So I'd like to thank the Geisel Committee, for your dedication and for giving me this wonderful gift. I love that there are people like you, and the members of the American Library Association, who celebrate these beginning books that help us take our first steps.

I'd like to thank my editors, Margery Cuyler and Kelsey Skea, and the good people at Two Lions, for your vision and unflagging support.

Thank you to Katrina Damkoehler, my wonderful art director, who somehow made my art shine brightly.

Holly McGhee, my agent and friend, I remember the first time I spoke with you on the phone was like finding a long lost sister. Thank you. For everything.

I want to thank my daughters, Kate and Lily, for being the best continuity editors and comedy testers anyone could ask for. And lastly, I'd like to thank my talented wife and partner, Anna. Full disclosure: this book would never have happened if it weren't for her. For years, Anna tried to convince me to create a children's book. Luckily for me, she never stopped "encouraging" me to do so. But in the end, it was her beautiful writing that got me to do it. And I'm so grateful to have been able to share her words, and this moment, together.

Thank you.

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## 2015 THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD COMMITTEE

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For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.