



*Gina Cascone &
Bryony Williams Sheppard*

161: Around the World Right Now

Gabriela Pereira: Hello, and welcome, word nerds, to DIY MFA Radio, the show that will help you write more, write better, write smarter. I'm Gabriela Pereira, instigator of DIY MFA, and your host for this podcast. Now, let's talk writing.

Hello. Hello, word nerds. Gabriela here, and welcome back to DIY MFA Radio. Today's show notes are over at diymfa.com/161, because it's Episode 161. Also, DIY MFA Radio is brought to you by our amazing fans and supporters on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron of the show and get some awesome exclusive bonuses, go to patreon.com/diymfa.

Now, today I have the pleasure of hosting a mother-daughter powerhouse writing team, Gina Cascone and Bryony Williams Sheppard – or Bree – who co-authored the picture book, *Around the World Right Now*, which happens to be one of my favorite picture books to read to my own kids at bedtime. Right now, it's in the bedtime rotation.

Gina is the author of 30 books in several different genres, and she's also written for the screen and for television – but *Around the World Right Now* is her first picture book. Bree has a degree in Theater Education from Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts.

And as a teacher at heart, she's been teaching since the age of 17. I've kind of been the same way so I feel like we're, you know, friends who connected late in life or something like, you know, of the same mind. And she's currently teaching near Princeton, New Jersey.

She loves bringing stories to life for her students, and her favorite part of lesson planning is choosing the best book for each class. So, welcome Gina and Bree, it is so wonderful to have you on the show.

Bryony Williams Sheppard: Thank you.

Gina Cascone: Thank you for having us.

GP: So, I love this book. I love the premise of it. As a kid who grew up bicultural and binational, the idea of not knowing what happens in different time zones was always very foreign to me; but I think a lot of kids don't know.

So, can you tell us a little bit about the inspiration behind this book; and also, tell listeners what *Around the World Right Now* is really about?

GC: Well, this book, we like to tell people is the result of three generations of brainpower, because what happened was my granddaughter, Bree's daughter, became obsessed with, 'What time is it in China right now? What time is it in London right now? What time is it in Rome right now?' And it was driving Bree crazy.



So, she said to me, “I’m going to put a big map up on the wall and put clocks all over the wall so that she never has to ask me again.” And Bree had been pestering me about wanting to write a picture book together; and I was really scared of doing it because I’ve learned that every level you go down, it gets harder and harder.

And I think I was basically being lazy at the time. So, I would say, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, we’ll write a picture book. Yeah, we’ll do that.”

But when Syd was so obsessed with time, I went to bed one night, I woke up the next morning and I thought, “Oh my gosh, there’s the books.” I called Bree, I said, “Do you want to write a picture book? I know what we’re going to do,” and we were off to the races.

GP: So, tell me a little bit more what the picture book actually is so that-- I mean, I know what it is because I’ve read it like a gajillion times with my kids. But for listeners who have not had the pleasure, if you could tell them a little bit more of what it’s about.

GC: Well, the book is a cultural look at all of the 24 time zones in the world. So, we start in San Francisco, California, and see what’s happening at 6:00 AM in San Francisco.

But then, at the same time, it’s 7:00 AM in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and it is 8:00 AM in New Orleans, Louisiana; and 9:00 AM in New York City, and so on and so on. We go all around the world starting with this one time, which is happening at the exact same moment, at different times all around the world.

And it was great fun to do the research. We learned a lot writing this book because what we did was, we took the big map and broke it into time zones; and we’d go down the time zone to look at what was there, what place might be interesting to both children and adults.

And then, we’d research the place and give a little picture of what was happening at that moment in time in that place. When we hit three o’clock in the morning, we had ocean straight down; and we panicked and thought, ‘Yikes! The book is over.’

And then, we realized, ‘No, in the ocean, the ocean is full of life.’ And so, at three o’clock in the morning, a baby humpback whale is born. So, it just goes to show that all around the world, just as we say, at every minute of every hour of every day, something wonderful is happening in our world.

GP: I love that. I mean, (A) It’s such a great message, right? Like unifying idea for a kid to be thinking like of all the wonderful things that can be happening. I was also curious about sort of how you chose the different locations, right?

Because, I mean, I’m a New Yorker, born and raised, so for me the fact that you guys chose New York, made total sense, because to me, that’s my universe, right?

GC: Right.

GP: You know, it was, but there were other interesting choices like, you know, Santa Fe as opposed to, say, the Rocky Mountains – or when you were choosing the ocean, like, what part of the ocean you chose, you know, and those ideas.

So, can you talk a little bit about what were some of the things that you thought about as

you selected the time zones and what happened in the different time zones?

GC: Bree, you want to jump in on this one?

BWS: Sure. Well, as my mom said, basically, we took a giant map out and we looked at all of the different time zones; and we started listing the different cities, in each time zone, that might be interesting for us to research – that might be, a sort of a standout city for kids that have either heard of or have visited the city.

And so, it was-- It was sort of a combination of, ‘Hey, what might be fun for us?’ And, ‘Hey, what actually is in this time zone that can be talked about?’ Like we said, when we went to 3:00 AM the only choice we really had was the ocean.

But there were other time zones that had a lot of different choices; and it really just came down to, ‘Okay, well, what would be interesting to say about one of these places? And, let’s pick one.’

And, we researched a bunch of different places in different time zones and figured out which one had the best flow to it that would go along with the rest of the story.

GC: And, as it’s a picture book, we also had to consider, what a picture would look like.

BWS: Yes.

GC: What would be visually interesting to children. And we got very, very lucky. Our publisher brought on an amazing artist, and we couldn’t be more thrilled with her work.

We went back to our original notes when the artwork came in to see what we had written down as what we envisioned the page to look like, and she hit every-- It was as if she’d read our notes before she started working, and she hadn’t.

[laughter]

GP: That’s amazing. And you know, it’s interesting because as someone who studied children’s books, one of the things that publishers often warn writers against is not to think too much about the photos or the images because you have no control over that, right?

Like the publisher brings in an illustrator and attaches an illustrator to the project, and how they interpret the book is sort of up to the illustrator. But at the same time, the fact that you had that in mind and chose things that lent themselves to more engaging imagery, I’m sure that that came into play.

So, can you talk a little bit about that delicate dance between not fixating too much on the images, but also giving the illustrator something to work with?

GC: Hmm. It is tricky business, huh?

BWS: It is. And I will say one thing because my mother’s experience is in books with many, many more words - and my experience is in books with many, many fewer words. Although I’ve never written them, I read at least six a day. And I own, I think all of them.

I constantly had to remind my mother while we were writing like, ‘Hmm, maybe we shouldn’t



use such large, large words.’ Yes, I want to teach my children new vocabulary, but we do need to go along with the developmental areas of where their vocabulary actually lies.

I think with that, it sort of did become, ‘Okay, let’s not think about the picture, let’s not think about using really long sentences – let’s just consider the developmental goals of what we want to reach for the book.’ And as far as just reading it, how much fun it will be to read.

GC: Yes, we specifically did the repetitive, “And somewhere in the world...” at the end of every page because that’s how kids--

BWS: Learn to read.

GC: -learned to identify words. And so, yeah.

GP: And it also creates sort of a rhythm to the story, right? That like with every spread “And somewhere in the world...”, it kind of guides the reader into the next sort of mini-chapter of the story. So, I think that worked really well.

And like you said, it also has a developmental advantage. You know, it’s interesting because back before in a past life, before I was doing DIY MFA radio, I was a Child Development researcher; and I studied how children’s play behaviors, like what developmentally appropriate, you know, toys and books were.

And it’s funny, like when people get too hung up on the research, it’s almost like they squash the life out of the product. So, it’s that-- Again, a delicate balance to like have something that both works on a literary level and carries the story forward, but then also adds that extra layer to the developmental level. Like that’s when you’ve hit gold, I think.

BWS: Yeah, well, we really could have-- You know, we are friends that just met later in life because I’m actually studying Educational Psychology right now. I’m working on receiving my Masters for Educational Psychology.

So, and for me, one of my biggest pushes, something that I’m incredibly passionate about is the idea of children’s ability to play, and how-- I basically make all of my lesson plans and do everything that I can to make sure that my children, my students get every opportunity to explore and discover and learn through play.

So, I think with this book, I really wanted that to be a goal that they had a lot of opportunities to look at the different things on each page, the different concepts on each page, and really sort of come out with what can we do. The teachers can have a lot of opportunities for ideas for the kids to just explore and play every concept on every page.

GP: I’m getting jealous as you say that because literally, as I was reading the book, I was thinking, ‘OMG, there’s got to be so many like lesson plan ideas.’ Like each time zone is in itself a little mini story that a child can fill in the blanks for, which I think is just so brilliant.

BWS: That was-- Like I said, that was very important to me. And actually, years back, I had a pre-K class that got very interested in traveling the world because the class itself was very diverse.

We had children from lots of different cultures in one class, so we had a big map on the wall and postcards coming in from different parts of the world; and we were learning about different things visiting each country.



And the class actually ended up writing their own little picture book based on this little birdie that was traveling the world and learning all of these different concepts.

So, I think in the back of my head that's always stayed with me because it's been a very, it was a very fun lesson for me to do with the kids. It was a year-long study, and we just had a blast. I think that's always been in the back of my head. So, this, for me, this book is just bringing that concept that my kids wrote – you know, I think it was five years ago now – to life.

GP: I love that.

GC: We tried to be accurate in everything-- We said so much though we had a very fun experience when we got to Hawaii at four o'clock in the morning. We thought, 'Oh my goodness, what kind of interesting thing is happening in Hawaii at four o'clock in the morning?'

And we thought first about sugar plantations, but then we found that, no, sugar plantations aren't really in operation anymore, because we figured people would be up early in the morning before the sun – well, that didn't work.

So, our solution to the problem was we called the library in Hawaii because we're both big fans of the library, and librarians are a wonderful resource for everyone. We called the library in Hawaii, and we got the most lovely librarian who--

And we told her what we were doing and we needed to know what was happening in her neck of the woods at four o'clock in the morning, she said, "Give a couple of hours, I'll call you right back."

We said, "Thank you." So, she actually called back and she had a few suggestions for us, and the one we chose was the dawn patrol that surfers – hardcore surfers – actually do get up at 4:00 in the morning to go hit the waves before they have to go to work and start their real-life day.

And we thought that would be fascinating for little kids, also for adults. We were pretty taken by that idea as well.

BWS: Yeah, I can't imagine loving anything enough to wake up at 4:00 in the morning to do it.

[laughter]

BWS: So, I was just impressed by that concept.

GC: Yeah, that's dedication.

GP: I loved also, I mean for me, one of the things that I liked a lot about the book was how you crossed Southern and Northern Hemisphere. And for me, so I grew up bicultural and bi-lingual.

My parents immigrated from Brazil, so I was used to – as a child – flying back and forth from New York to Sao Paulo, like pretty much like two, three times a year. I have very fond memories of my parents – like us landing after winter break in JFK airport in New York City, my mom whipping out our school uniforms from her carry-on.

We'd get dressed in the car, and they would literally drop us off at school on the way home from the airport because they had to get every last moment of, you know, vacation time in with the family.



But you know, I find that a lot of people don't realize the difference between the Northern and Southern hemisphere and like, not just the climate difference, but also the fact that time zones shift in the opposite direction.

So, yeah, I was wondering like, can you talk a little bit about that? Like when you chose the different locations, you know, how you kind of picked, whether it was Northern Hemisphere, Southern, and, sort of, how you did that.

BWS: Well, when we work, we use a big map and we have little stickies--

GC: Little flags.

BWS: Little flags. We like to-- After we've gone through all of the places we might go, we like to see the map looking full, you know, with a beautiful spread across the map.

And that's part of why we chose some places over another. It wasn't really that one was more interesting than another, but that we needed to cover the map as fully as we possibly could.

And as we're working on other around the world ideas, we keep all of our stickers on and color-code them all because we want to try to hit as many different places as we possibly can – and not just keep going back to the same place over and over again because we want to show the amazing diversity that we have in this world; and yet, we're all kind of the same, anyway.

GP: I love that. And I think that was something that definitely jumped out at me was how it felt very balanced in terms of the continents and in terms of, sort of, where the locations fell.

I mean, part of that, obviously, as you're moving across the globe, the continents change, but I was also-- You know, given that you could have chosen any number of things in any time zone, I noticed that there were definitely, there was a good spread across the globe, which I thought was cool.

GC: Well, we can thank the map for that. That's just a visual--

BWS: It's a giant map.

[laughter]

GP: So, Bree, you were mentioning how as a teacher, you were sort of thinking about the different ways for kids to explore each of those time zones.

And I, sort of, touched on this before, but that idea of how almost each little micro-story about a time zone felt like a little, almost like a story starter. Like did you guys develop any teacher materials or have you used the book in your own classroom in any way? I'd love to hear more about that.

BWS: Well, I did develop some teacher ideas. There are two in the back of the book to begin with. And then, on our website, we do have a few other ideas that I came up with. But I also have a lot of friends who are teachers, who have gone through and have come up with their own ideas as well – so, that's always a lot of fun.

And as far as going through my own, going in my own class, when the book was released – everybody, all of my coworkers could not have been more excited for me, and that was just wonderful.



So, I brought it into my own class, and I read it to-- I'm a preschool teacher, so we have two preschool classes in my school. One is the toddlers, and one is the older preschool children; and I read it to both classes.

It was so interesting to me because I thought, when we were writing the book, I had every answer question or every question answered in my head. I knew everything that a kid was going to ask me, and I knew how to answer it.

And boy, was I wrong, because all of my students picked up on completely different ideas that I never even, had even thought of when we were going through the book, which is why I love children because they can come up with the most incredible things that adults just can't see.

And, most of my little ones, including my own son who's three-and-a-half, their favorite thing to do in the book is to go through each page and try to find the hidden clock on the page because our illustrator, again is brilliant and she put a little clock on every single page.

And so, my little ones really love to find the hidden clock; and I've been using that for time-telling because I've been showing them, you know, each clock says exactly what time it is on the page.

And, we move the clock-- We move the hands around the clock that we have in the classroom and see if we can match the clocks on the page, and see if they can get some concepts of time-telling.

My older preschool kids were definitely more interested in what everybody was wearing and how everybody looked on each page. So, we talked about how people dress differently in different cultures.

And then, I also brought the book into my daughter's third grade class, and they definitely were the ones that really threw me through a loop because they came up with questions that I really had never even considered when we were writing it because they're older and they have more questions.

I guess, I'm not even really sure if that's true, but they started talking to me about what countries they have visited; and they wanted to know, you know, what pages, what we talked about in the countries that they had visited and had we looked at the countries that they had visited that weren't in the book, and did we learn anything about that?

And then, they would tell me about different things on the page. Like, in Madagascar, they had done a project in my daughter's class this past year all about animals – and they all had to research animals. So, they all started telling me about lemurs because there's lemur on the page. So, that was fun. [laughs]

GP: What were some of the like most fascinating questions you've gotten, like the wackiest or most interesting?

GC: Well, I have a cute story about how a child's mind works; and it was the day that we got the first copies of the book, I was putting my grandson down for his nap. He's three, and we were snuggled up and he wanted to read *Around the World Right Now*.

So, we read the whole book, and then we closed the book and he snuggled up and he said to me, "Mom-mom, I can't wait to travel all around the world." And it just melted my heart. And he got, he snuggled a little closer and looked up at me and said, "Maybe Saturday."



[laughter]

GC: And, that's how a child's mind works. Yeah, maybe Saturday.

GP: I love that. That's fantastic.

GC: It's the wonderful perspective and sense of, just pure joy that you get from a child.

BWS: To answer your question, I've gotten-- Mostly the questions that I've been getting from the older kids and from the younger kids too, is sort of going back to vocabulary.

When I told my mother we couldn't use such big words, but I did want to make sure to broaden their vocabulary. One of the things that we did try to do is broaden their vocabulary and use some of the vocabulary from the locations that we're in.

So, I've been asked a lot, you know, what is an Adobe building? What exactly does 'queuing-up' mean? Because when the kids are in London, they're queuing-up to feed the pelicans.

So, I know that my daughter's third grade class specifically, they were like, 'What does queuing-up mean? I have no idea what you're talking about right now.' But then, they got really excited and apparently started using that lingo in their class.

GP: That's fantastic. So, another thing that I love is the fact that you are a mother-daughter team and you wrote this book together. So, how did that work, because not all mother-daughters would do well writing together, shall we say?

So, like, how did you sort of logistically put it together? Were you physically in the same space or did you sort of move the draft back-and-forth? How did the workflow and the writing process happen?

BWS: Well, I've been helping my mother write since I was 11.

GC: Yes, she has. She has been my creative consultant since I started writing Young Adult and middle grade stuff – mostly Young Adult because she was in high school when I was doing that.

And I was writing thrillers and that every day, I would give her a chapter to see her reaction to the chapter – what she thought, where she thought it was going – and that was how I made my decisions about what I would do next. A lot of-- A lot of time, just to surprise the daylights out of her. So, she's been at this forever.

GP: So, by the time you did this, you basically had the whole process down because you'd been doing this forever and ever.

BWS: Because we've-- Right. Because we've been at this for a very long time. But no, this was actually the first time that I got to sit in a room with her, and really sort of work out the wording together and figure everything out together; and I think we worked very nicely together.

There were definitely some moments where, you know, she wanted one thing and I wanted another thing; and we had to figure out what was the better thing to do. And she would state her case and I would state my case, and then we'd, you know, decide who won, basically.



But I think we worked well together. There was never any moments of, why am I working with my mother, would've--

[laughter]

GC: There was a lot of laughter going on. Everybody else in the house was kind of wondering why this should be called work because there were times we just fell into absolute fits of laughter. So, we had great fun.

GP: That's fantastic, because like I said, I'm not sure a lot of mother-daughter pairs could write together without, say, killing each other. So, I mean, I love my mother to death, I'm not sure we'd write a book together.

BWS: There was definitely a moment in my head when it all started going, 'Oh, can I really do this?'

GC: Well, you know, and I think that there was a period of time where Bree was really enjoying the opportunity to assert herself and boss me around a little bit. So, that worked out fine.

BWS: That was fine, I'm not going to lie.

GC: Role reversal is a good idea.

GP: Another thing that I really loved that you said early on in the interview, Gina, was this idea of like, 'the younger you go in children's books, the harder it is,' and I am right there with you.

For me, the holy grail of writing is the picture book. Like I think if a writer can craft a picture book, then all the other longer word counts can fall into place. So, can you talk a little bit about why that's so, why is it so much more difficult to write small than to write big?

GC: Oh, there are so many reasons. Writing for adults is easy in comparison; I can use my everyday language, I can look up words, I can explain things for very long periods of time.

Whereas when you come down lower and lower, the next grade down, I wrote for Young Adults – the problem there was not so much with language, although you tone it down a little bit, the problem there was getting rid of adults because you had to make teens independent, but you can't make a world where no adults exist.

So, it was always about, how do I get rid of the adults believably? Then we come down to middle grade – to the, you know, fourth, fifth, sixth grade group – and that's where you have to write shorter.

You can't have as many pages, and your language has to be appropriate to them. I remember spending one whole day – and part of it was my procrastination – one whole day, looking for a way to get across the idea of rationalizing. You know, he did something and he rationalized it by--

Well, if you're in third grade, you are not aware that you're rationalizing – so, that was difficult. And so, when Bree said to me, "I want to write a picture book," I thought, 'Oh, I don't think so. To be able to tell a whole chapter, basically a whole story in two sentences? I don't think I can do that, and with limited language.'



So, it's a huge challenge because you have to be-- Every bit is truthful. Every bit is engaging as you do in, say, a 20- or 30-page chapter. But it was really a joyful thing. It was really stretching my abilities. I say, you know, it took me 30 years of learning how to do this to be able to write a picture book.

GP: I wholeheartedly agree, though. Like I think you're so spot on right about how it gets harder. The other piece of it I think too is sort of an attitude piece, that kids don't cut books any slack.

Like I find that adults are much more likely to read things out of politeness or out of obligation, but teenagers and kids are like, Uh-uh. If it's not interesting, they just put it down, they read something else.

GC: Mm-hmm.

BWS: You are right. Children will walk away from a picture book if it's not interesting to them at all; and it's hard to try to keep their attention because, you know, they know what they like and they're going to do what they like – and they will not be polite about it.

GC: You are correct about that too. [laughs] I luckily have had good experiences where most of the children I know have been super, either they have been super polite or they really truly have been engaged with this book.

BWS: Yeah, they really have. It's been very rewarding.

GP: I think the other challenge too, especially with the picture book set, is to engage kids without it becoming gimmicky or sort of like flashing lights and noises, you know what I mean? Like, you know, the kind of like toys where like literally the only reason children are playing with it is because--

BWS: Is because it makes noise.

GP: Exactly.

BWS: Yeah. I've got a lot of those in my house. They were given to me by people.

GP: Yeah. It's the same thing with us too. It's kind of like when people hand you that thing and you're like, 'Oh, thank you.'

BWS: 'Great, I'll be sure to return the favor, someday.'

GP: Exactly. Kind of like the same way when you take kids to someone's house, and they like hop them up on sugar or something; and you're like, 'Oh great, now, I get to bring my child home and they're basically on cocaine for kids.'

BWS: Awesome. Yeah, I love that. My parents like to do that to my children.

GC: Oh, I knew that was coming.

[laughter]

GP: It's the grandparents' job, right?



BWS: They give them plenty amounts of ice cream, and then send them home.

GC: The joy of being a grandparent.

GP: But you know, I think that does-- That brings up an interesting question though, right? Like how as writers when you're crafting a picture book, you're already dealing with something that is so tight, in term, I don't want to say limited because I think, in fact, the fact that there are few words isn't a limitation, it's like an opportunity for awesomeness.

But the fact that it has to be so tight; and yet, you don't have the bells and whistles of say an iPad or something. And I mean for you guys, I think you hit on it with the time zones and sort of engaging kids in that way. But like, how else can-- Do you have any advice for listeners on how to do that with a different topic? Like, how do you make a picture book so that it can compete with the iPad or whatever?

BWS: Well, we did try to add some funny little aspects in it, funny little quirks that I think kids picked up on. I mean, something so silly as, "In the South Sandwich Islands, nobody's eating sandwiches for lunch." So many kids have listened to that and been like, 'South Sandwich Islands, who names a place that? That's so ridiculous.'

So, I think with the language, and we threw some things in there for adults too. My mother's favorite joke is and always will be "A girl from Ipanema goes walking on a beach". She thinks that's hysterical. You know, you had to let her have something.

GC: Because it's the adults who initially read the book to children, and I have found as I went down from grade-to-grade, you've got to engage the parent too because remember as a parent you know, you've read this book 147 times.

You've read this book so many times that you have memorized every page, you can turn the page without looking at the words; that's how many times you've read it. And so, we have to keep the parents as interested and engaged as we do the children.

GP: I can definitely attest to that. As a mom who has actually memorized certain picture books because when I was doing like my mini book tour earlier this year and I didn't have the books conveniently with me, I would literally recite them over the phone to my kids at bedtime.

But like, there are definitely certain books that I will-- When my kids are choosing their bedtime stories, there are certain books that I try to present to them more enticingly than, say, other books because there's certain books that I'm like, 'I could read this 150,000 times, and I will never get sick of it,' and other books not so much. So, I totally agree with you on that one.

GC: Yeah. Sense of humor goes a long, long way in all things in life.

GP: Agreed. So, you hinted at the fact that there might be other Around the World things happening, like what's next for both of you? Do you have another collaborative project? Do you have any individual projects you'd like to share with our listeners?

GC: Well, we're working together on a couple of different things. We certainly are talking about more Around the World titles because there's so much there. And we live in a time when I think it's very important to show children that we live in a big, beautiful world; we're all in this together.



We should celebrate our differences because it makes the planet so much more rich and appealing. And we should also understand that, at the heart, we are all the same.

GP: That's beautiful. I love it.

GC: So, there are all kinds of topics that we could get into like breakfast, lunch, and dinner – like school, like-- Bree.

BWS: Sports, pets, music.

GC: Music.

BWS: Oh, holiday celebrations, birthday celebrations – celebrations, in general. There are a lot of different topics that I know just in my class alone, I have discussed with my students that I think it would be fun to put it all in one place and be able to allow the kids to research or study one topic going through a book, all around the world.

GP: I love the idea of taking a theme and going around the world. Like for me, the one that really resonated as you were mentioning them was the idea of the birthday, right? Because in Brazil and in the United States, birthdays are celebrated.

I mean, even though they're many, many similarities, they are different. And like, even just the way you say Happy Birthday and, you know, Parabéns in Portuguese, it's different.

And I remember like as a kid, being really weirded out by the fact that people opened their presents at birthday parties in the United States, and you just don't do that in Brazil. Like, it's just weird. It's almost considered rude, in a way.

So, it's like a very bizarre thing, like having that dual-cultural experience. So, I think that would be-- I mean, selfishly, that's the one I would wish for you to do because I think that would be so awesome.

BWS: Well, we'll get right on that. We actually did-- We do have a blog on our website, and one of our blog postings was about birthdays around the world. It was my husband's birthday or my daughter's birthday or something that we were celebrating.

We wrote a blog about Birthdays Around the World, and we were amazed to find all the different celebrations and the different ways that birthdays are celebrated. My favorite, personally, was Australia, where apparently the kids eat fairy toast, which is just buttered toast with sprinkles on it. That just seems fun to me.

GP: Yeah.

BWS: I want to go to school with that.

GP: So yeah, I love it. I can't wait to see what both of you come up with next because that sounds fantastic.

GC: Well, it is very exciting. And, in the back matter of Around the World Right Now, we suggest to teachers or parents to get a globe – because all children love to play with globes, even grown-up children – and to go around the world, and pick places and explore them and compare them to where you live.



And I think that that would be just so much fun in so many different ways to see how other people do things and maybe to adopt some of the things that other people do that seems appealing to you.

GP: Absolutely. Wholeheartedly agree with you on that. So, I always end each interview with the same question, what's your number one tip for writers?

BWS: Be patient, that's mine. Patience. This was the first time I'd ever done this, and we wrote this book quite some time ago now; my daughter was six, she just celebrated her ninth birthday.

Especially picture books, because I've certainly seen my mother's books come out, but picture books, it's a long process because you have to have the illustrator draw the pictures and put it all together, and really see how it's all going to lay out.

And it really is, it's patience. Know that something wonderful is coming if you just breathe through it.

GC: That's true. Somebody asked me this question a long, long time ago, and I think I still stand by the answer; and my answer was, 'always write from the good side of your heart'; and by that, I mean be honest and don't be judgmental.

Just tell the truth and be simple and easy with it, and have a good sense of humor, and whatever you produce is bound to resonate with someone.

GP: That's fantastic.

GC: That's my hope, anyway.

GP: Well, and I think a lot of people, you know, the writing process can be not a downer, but it has its hurdles, right? And so, I think kind of both of those pieces of advice taken together – both the patience and also writing from the good side of your heart, like writing with optimism – I think is a good combination to have.

GC: It's essential, otherwise, it's not joyful; and this should be a joyful process. Whatever it is you're creating, when you're in the midst of creation, it should be a joyful adventure.

GP: I love it. Well, thank you so, so much for being on the show. This was a blast; I loved speaking with both of you.

BWS: Well, thank you.

GC: Thank you. Thank you for having us, and thank you for your insights as well. We'll take them with us.

GP: Fantastic. All right, word nerds. I hope you enjoyed that interview as much as I did. Keep writing and keep being awesome.

