

The

READ TO ME

Planet



Sharing the love and joy of reading aloud

A Read To Me International Publication

Summer 2006

TALK STORY

By Cedric Yamanaka

There was always something magical about the library at Kapalama Elementary School. When I was in the first grade, the dimly-lit library was located on the second floor of an old wooden building, offering a panoramic view of North School Street and the Kamehameha Shopping Center across the way, and smelling of wood and books. I could spend hours there, seeking out the finest dinosaur books. Then I'd take my treasures home.

"That's a Tyrannosaurus Rex," Mom'd say, as I stared at the colored pictures in the book. "That's a brontosaurus. And this one is, how do you say that, "STEG-oh-SORE-us?" I'm pretty sure my appreciation for books started there, during those early, formative years. And through the years, the decades, my love for reading has remained strong. The subject matter may have changed—my interests have evolved from dinosaurs to insects to sharks to mystery novels to literature—but my love for books has always remained.

Today, things have come full circle. My six-year old son, Caleb, loves to read. "Read to me, Dad," he says. And no matter how tough the day has been, I will usually oblige. Several years back, Caleb enjoyed books such as *But Not the Hippopotamus*, and, of course, Dr. Seuss books. Now, you guessed it, his favorites are the dinosaur books. "That's a Coelophysis," he says, pointing to a picture in one of his many dinosaur books. "And that's a Compsognathus."

"A what?" I ask, baffled. "Where did all of these dinosaurs come from? When I was your age, there were like maybe ten different dinosaurs. Now there are hundreds. Why is that?" Caleb shrugs and presses forward. "This is a Deinonychus. And that's a Gallimimus." These are some of my favorite moments, just before it's time to go to sleep. Caleb has taken a bath and brushed his teeth. He is in his pajamas. We lie in bed together, his head on my shoulder, as I read from the book of his choice until he falls asleep.

As I carry him to his bed, I often wonder what the future will hold for him. Will his love for books follow him throughout his life? Will he major in English, like his Dad? Maybe he'll grow up and become a struggling writer like his Dad? One thing's for sure. Caleb has discovered the joys of reading, and the unique magic of books will stay with him forever.

Cedric Yamanaka is an award-winning fiction writer. He is the author of In Good Company, a collection of short stories. He is also the host of Hawaii Public Radio's "Aloha Shorts," a weekly show dedicated to Hawaii literature.





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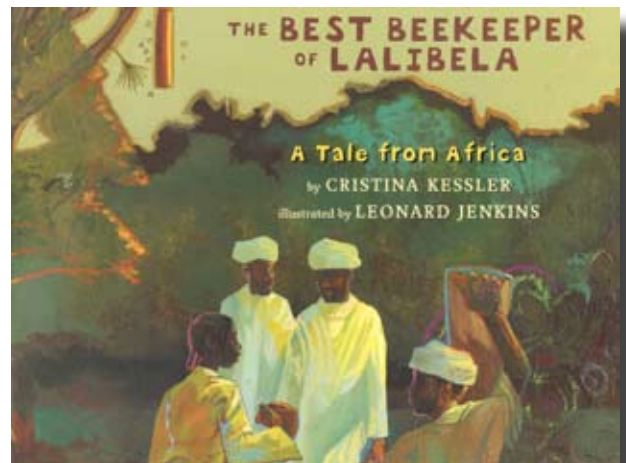
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President's Message

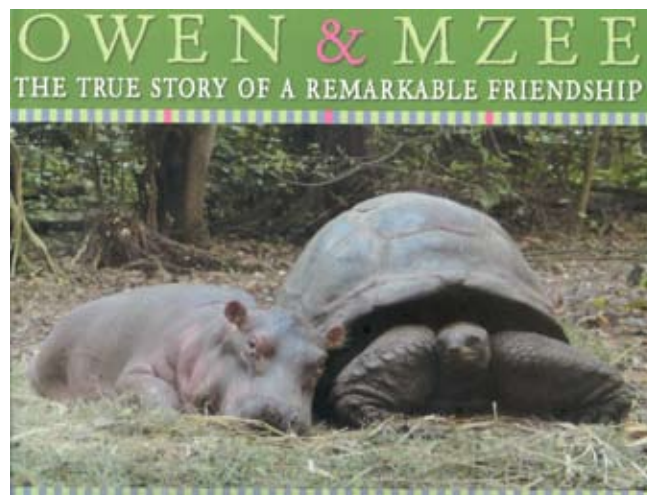
Remember when summer vacations were three months long? For those lucky enough, it was also a time for travel. I can still remember one of my most memorable summers. It was a visit to my Basan (Grandmother) and countless other relatives in Okinawa, Japan. Although language was a barrier, the universal language of love prevailed.

Today, as then, we don't need to physically visit a place to learn about it. We can do this through the world of books. What better time to learn about the world than when our schedules aren't as demanding? And what better way to bond with our children and to stimulate their imaginations than reading to them?

I recently purchased two books, two different genres, both taking place in Africa. The first, *The Best Beekeeper of Lalibela: A Tale from Africa* by Cristina Kessler, takes place in Ethiopia, where a girl named Almaz determines that she will one day produce the best honey in the land. In a society where men are the keepers of bees, discover how Almaz realizes her dream.



The other book, *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship* by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu, is a pictorial story of the unlikely friendship between two creatures, a baby hippo and a 130-year-old giant tortoise. Learn how this unexpected friendship blossoms, and see what other lessons may be gained.



This summer, make reading to your child a priority and help create lasting memories. You will never regret it.

Happy reading in Summer

Lynne Waihee



Weinberg Grant

GRANT FROM WEINBERG FRIENDS PROGRAM

Read To Me International is pleased to announce its designation by the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise as the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg's Friends Program.

The Weinberg Friends program allows a service organization to perform a community service project. Upon completion, the Foundation contributes \$10,000 to an approved charity selected by the service organization. Read To Me International will use the grant to fund a pilot program for young mothers to encourage early children's literacy.

As part of the collaboration, over twenty-five adult members of The Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise performed a community service project on the morning of Saturday, April 22, at a Parents and Children Together (PACT) shelter. The volunteers power-washed, painted and organized the shelter, as well as gardened and trimmed the surrounding area.

"We are so grateful to the Weinberg Foundation and the members of the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise for their generosity and selfless service to the community," said Lynne Waihee, President of Read To Me International. "It is through efforts such as this that we are able to share what we know about the importance of reading aloud to children with those families that need it the most."

The Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise has a longstanding interest in education and literacy. From 1992-1994, the club was instrumental in launching a statewide Read To Me multi-media campaign, from which Read To Me International Foundation was eventually established.

Some Facts about the
Rotary Club of Honolulu
Sunrise

Chartered on May 7,
1990

Members work together
on projects that benefit
the youth and the com-
munity.

Selected twice as the Dis-
trict 5000 "Rotary Club
of the Year"

Recipient of the coveted
Rotary Achievements
Award for assisting in the
development of the Read
to Me" program

To learn more, visit:
[www.RotaryHonoluluSun-
rise.org](http://www.RotaryHonoluluSunrise.org).





Travel Log

JAPAN

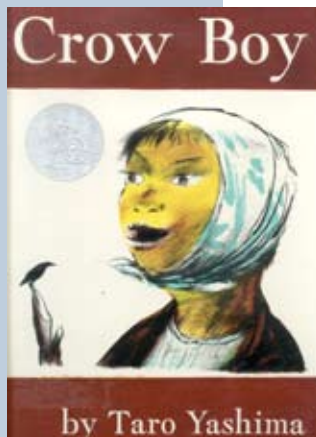
By Liane Akana



Living on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is easy to forget that there is a world of other people and cultures beyond our shores. That is probably why I love that authors, through their books, can transport their readers to the farthest corners of the world. Once there, we can slip into the mind of a character and for a short time immerse ourselves in someone else's life without ever leaving the comfort of home.

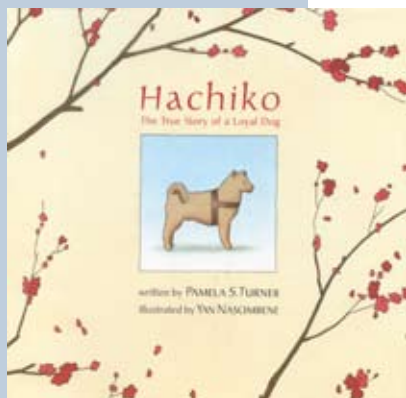
I recently traveled to Japan with my husband and fulfilled a lifelong dream to visit the homeland of my great-grandparents. The Japanese folk stories from my childhood such as "Peach Boy" and "The Tongue-Cut Sparrow" (from *Peach Boy and Other Japanese Children's Favorite Stories* and *Japanese Children's Favorite Stories*, respectively), both by Florence Sakade, no doubt fueled my interest in Japan.

Over the last decade, the births of my sons brought new opportunities to enjoy stories of Japan and kept that interest alive. Among our favorites was *Crow Boy*, a Caldecott Honor Award story by Taro Yashima, a must read-aloud about a shy boy marginalized for being different until a most unusual talent is revealed.



Another favorite book in our home library is *Under the Cherry Blossom Tree* by Allen Say about a village curmudgeon who gets his just dessert for his treatment of his neighbors. Of course, the book that inspired me to finally make my dream a reality was reading Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. After a long weekend of binge reading this most memorable novel, I knew I had to plan a visit.

It was only after I arrived in Japan that I realized how much of an influence books and stories had in my life. I noticed that wherever I traveled in Japan I was reminded of one book or another. I caught myself watching the crows playing under the cherry blossom trees and attempted to mimic their calls like Crow Boy. A visit to Ueno Zoo brought to mind the story *Faithful Elephants* by Yukio Tsuchiya, a heart-wrenching story about the far-reaching effects of war and its least obvious victims—animals. On another occasion, I spied a man struggling to peddle his bicycle through the busy streets of Tokyo with a large wooden box strapped above his rear tire and immediately thought of the little old man from Allen Say's *Kamishibai Man*. Arguably Say's best book to date, it tells a poignant story of an old man who yearns to return to a simpler time when children clamored for his handmade candies and gathered for stories from his "paper theater."



Books are such a big part of my life that I assumed everyone makes "book-to-life" connections like I do. I was surprised that my husband didn't appreciate my desire to make a special out-of-the-way trip to the train station in Shibuya to visit the Hachiko statue. He remained unconvinced despite my recounting of the amazing story as told in *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog* by Pamela Turner of a dog



Travel Log

named Hachiko who continued his daily trip to the train station to wait for his master even after his master's death. I, nonetheless, was thrilled to get my picture taken next to the well-known landmark.

A funny thing happened when I returned home; I found myself rereading the stories recalled while in Japan. The great thing was that the stories reminded me of the people and places I had experienced while in Japan, and I got to relive parts of the trip all over again!

If something as simple as reading books can enhance the travel experience of an adult like me, just think what it will do for your children! Next time you plan your family trip, remember to include picture books about the region and culture you are visiting, and see how much more memorable everyone's experience is.

And when you return, don't forget to reread those stories!

Delectable Books with a Japanese Flavor

Baker, Keith. *The Magic Fan*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1989.

Myers, Tim. *Basho and the Fox*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000.

Myers, Tim. *Tanuki's Gift*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2003.

Sakade, Florence. *Japanese Children's Favorite Stories*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2003.

Sakade, Florence. *Peach Boy and Other Japanese Children's Favorite Stories*. Vermont: Charles Tuttle Publishing Co. Inc., 1958

Say, Allen. *Kamishibai Man*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

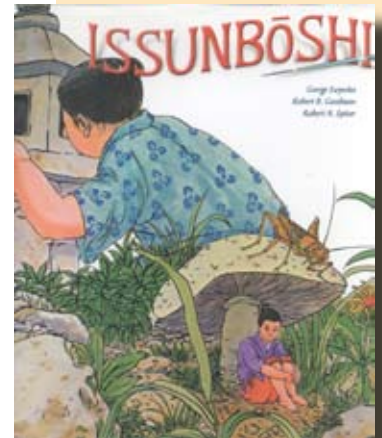
Say, Allen. *Under the Cherry Blossom Tree*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974.

Sueoka, George. *Issunboshi*. Hawaii: Island Heritage Publishing, 2003

Tsuchiya, Yukio. *Faithful Elephants*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988.

Turner, Pamela S. *Hachiko*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

Yashiro, Taro. *Crow Boy*. New York: Viking, 1955.



Read To Me in Romania



Linda Eubank, dressed in ta babushka, the traditional scarf, and vest, is pictured here in Romania with some of her kindergarten families.

"CITESTE PENTRU MINE" IN ROMANIA

Former Read To Me staff member Linda Eubank, who left in May 2005 to join the Peace Corps, may be living on a different continent now, but she has continued to spread the important message of reading aloud to children. Based in Satu Mare, a town in the northwest corner of Romania near the Hungarian border, Linda recently launched the project, "Citeste pentru mine" ("Read To Me").

On March 29, 2006, in this town of approximately 120,000 people comprising 60% Romanians and 40% Hungarians, attendees assembled at the Dumbrava Minunata Kindergarten. Dumbrava Minunata, which means "exquisite/wonderful grove," was so named because the kindergarten was the first in Romania to offer an environmental curriculum, incorporating environmental lessons into daily activities.

The mayor's wife was in attendance, and parents who attended the event learned about the kindergarten's new lending library, why and how the teachers at Dumbrava Minunata were incorporating reading aloud into everyday activities, why it was important for parents to read aloud to their children, new and interesting books to share with their children, and volunteer reading opportunities. The event was featured in the Satu Mare Daily, and according to another newspaper, the "Read To Me" project was the first of its kind in Romania.



The concept has since been presented to all of the kindergarten directors in Satu Mare County, and several are interested in starting Read To Me projects of their own. Linda and her Romanian colleagues are hoping to initiate a project at the Satu Mare Public Library to create a children's reading room as well as start a weekly "story hour" at the library. At the beginning of the next school year they are planning a "Read To Me Day,"

inviting "celebrity" readers to read aloud to children.



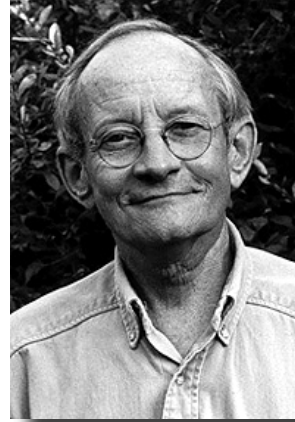
Read To Me is proud of Linda for her great work in spreading the love and joy of reading aloud in Romania. As a Peace Corps environmental volunteer, Linda's duties run the gamut of helping the director with administrative tasks, planning special events, working on environmental projects with children, teaching English, photographing and documenting activities for European Union grant reports, starting a non-profit parents' association for the kindergarten, and the list goes on—right down to fixing the Xerox machine, which in Linda's own words, "is no change from working at Read To Me!"



U.S. Poet Laureate Visiting Hawaii

For all you poetry lovers out there, the second week of November offers a unique opportunity for you to meet with Ted Kooser, the country's newest Poet Laureate and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

A recipient of two NEA fellowships in poetry, the Pushcart Prize, the Stanley Kunitz Prize, the James Boatwright Prize, and a Merit Award from the Nebraska Arts Council, Ted Kooser is the author of eleven full-length collections of poetry, including *Delights and Shadows* (Copper Canyon Press, 2004) and *Weather Central* (University of Pittsburg Press, 1994). Over the years his works have appeared in many periodicals including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Nation*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Antioch Review*.



Kooser's poems are included in textbooks and anthologies used in secondary schools and college classrooms across the country. Teachers may want to check out the workshop for teachers on teaching and writing poetry. Here is the schedule of events, subject to change:

"Ted Kooser: A Reading and Conversation"
Monday, November 6, 7 pm
University of Hawaii Campus Center Ballroom
Free public lecture

"Do It Yourself Poetry: a Session for Writers with Ted Kooser"
Tuesday, November 7, 2 - 4 pm
Windward Community College Paliku Theater
\$25, registration is required.

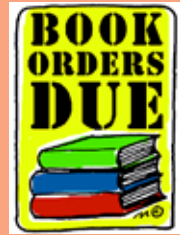
"Reading by Ted Kooser"
Wednesday, November 8, time TBD
Kilauea Military Camp Theater, Big Island

"Local Wonders, Poetry and Place"
Thursday, November 9, 7 pm
Windward Community College Paliku Theater
Free public lecture

"What Makes Poetry and Why Teachers Should Care"
Friday, November 10, 8:30 am - 2 pm
Windward Community College Paliku Theater
\$50, registration is required. Fee includes lunch at Akoakoa.

Registration for workshops will be available sometime after the middle of August. For more information, please contact Lillian Cunningham at 236-9236 or email her at lillianc@hawaii.edu.

For more information about Ted Kooser, visit www.TedKooser.com



Save Money
AND
Raise Funds for Read
To Me!

By visiting the Read To Me website, www.read-tomeintl.org and purchasing books through the amazon.com link, you can get great discounts on books and help Read To Me International raise funds for its projects.

For every book purchased through the Read To Me website, amazon.com will donate 5-10% of the purchase price to Read To Me International.

The site offers book lists and reviews for all types of children's literature and parenting resources.

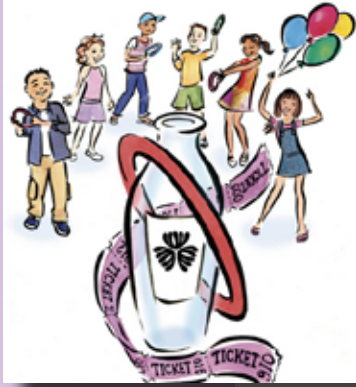
Check it out!





Keiki Fair

JOIN US AT KAHALA MALL'S KEIKI FAIR



Jamba Juice presents the 10th Annual Kahala Mall Keiki Fair
Saturday, September 9, 10 am – 2 pm

Join us for a day of games, art, music, fruits and fun! Buy scrips for \$1 each and use them to play your favorite games of skill or do art activities. Every child wins a prize and there are games for kids of every size. Your keiki will love the Costume Character Parade and Jamba Juice's yummy smoothie samples.

Donate a brand new children's book at Center Court and receive a coupon for a free Jamba Juice while supplies last. All proceeds benefit Read to Me International, so come on out and enjoy a fun filled day at Kahala Mall while supporting Read To Me.

We look forward to seeing you and your keiki at
Kahala Mall's Keiki Fair!




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