



This month, we've been talking to . . . Sabrina Malcolm

Sabrina Malcolm is an illustrator and graphic designer with a background in botany and geology. Her illustrations have appeared in scientific publications, issues of the *School Journal*, and picture books. Sabrina illustrated *Koro's Medicine* by Melanie Drewery (2004) and *The Flytrap Snaps* by Johanna Knox (2011), both of which were finalists in the New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children and Young Adults. *Blue Moon Bird* is her first book as both author and illustrator.

We asked Sabrina some questions about herself and her work, and here's what she said ...

Where were you born?

Michigan, U.S.A.

Where do you live now?

Wellington, New Zealand.

Where did you go to school?

For primary school, Randolphville School in New Jersey (U.S.A.) and Hampden Street School in Nelson.

What were you like in school?

Quiet. Usually.

What is the naughtiest thing you did?

One lunchtime I surprised myself by getting into a scuffle with a boy who'd been calling me names. I started pushing him, and pushed him right across the classroom and over a desk. He was fine, just a bit embarrassed. And he stopped calling me names.

What was your favourite book growing up?

I didn't have just one favourite. Some of my best-loved, in no particular order, were: *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew*, *Fox in Socks*, *Harriet the Spy*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Half Magic*, the Carbonel series, and *The Sword in the Stone*.

Who is your favourite children's author?

If I had to choose just one, it'd be Dr Seuss.

What is your favourite food?

No dithering here: cheesecake.

Favourite colour?

It varies, but at the moment, red.

Favourite movie?

My favourite kids' movie is *Monsters Inc.*

Who inspired you to write/illustrate?

My parents were always encouraging, and they gave my sisters and me amazing, inspiring books.

How did you get started? How old were you?

I started drawing when I was a kid, but didn't start writing seriously until I was really old — in my late thirties.

Why did you want to be a writer/illustrator?

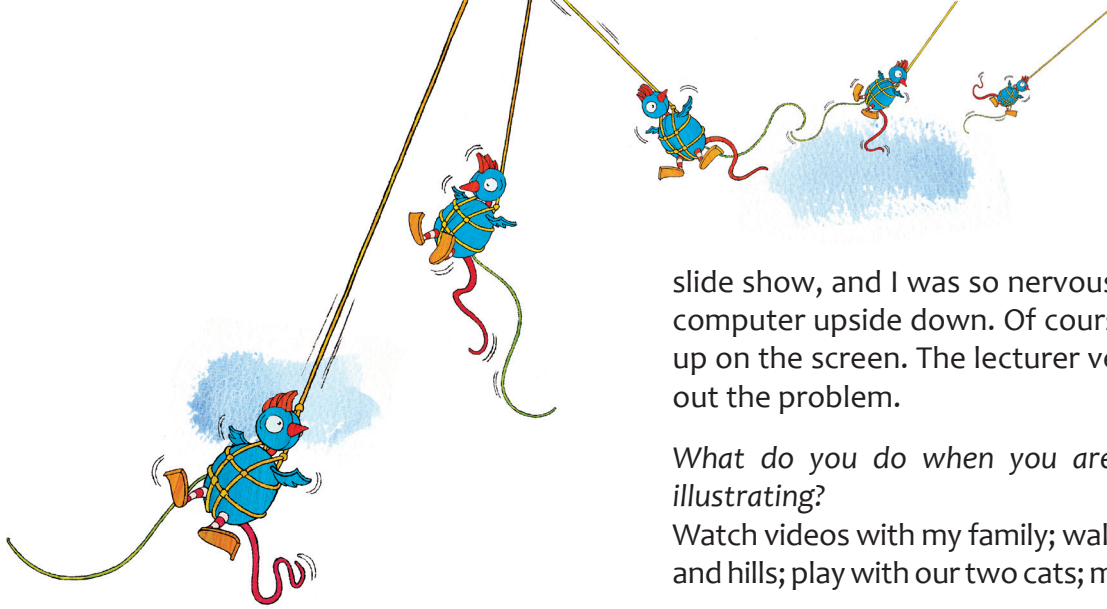
I always liked drawing, so being an illustrator was a logical step. I think I like writing because it's a way of talking to other people.

How do you think up ideas?

With illustration, I spend time thinking about the story I'm illustrating, and ideas for drawings and scenes gradually take shape in my mind. I'm much newer to writing, but ideas seem to come from things happening around me — some little incident or thought will sit in my head for a while, and gradually brew up into an idea.

Do you have a special place where you write/illustrate?

When it's sunny, there's an irresistible spot on our couch. Otherwise I'm at my drawing desk in the spare bedroom.



What is the best thing about being an author/illustrator?
Making things up.

Have you had a funny or embarrassing moment as an author/illustrator?

When I was an art student, I had to give a presentation to the class. I'd made a disc of my

slide show, and I was so nervous I put it into the computer upside down. Of course nothing came up on the screen. The lecturer very kindly sorted out the problem.

What do you do when you are not writing or illustrating?

Watch videos with my family; walk around the city and hills; play with our two cats; make cheesecake.

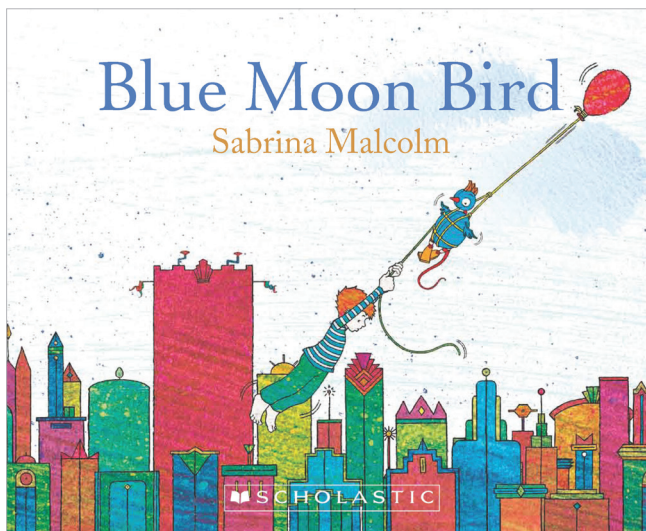
What would you have chosen to be if you were not an author/illustrator?

I used to want to be an architect or an astronomer. Much earlier, I wanted to be the fat lady in the circus.

Which famous person from the past would you like to talk to?

Merlin.

SABRINA MALCOM'S DEBUT SCHOLASTIC NZ BOOK



Blue Moon Bird

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