



## Getting to know our members! Interview with Megan Emmot!

*Every month I am interviewing one of our members. This month, I am really excited to interview Megan Emmot, who many of you know from our Sparks Sessions. Megan writes brilliant prompts for us every month in addition to being an awesome critique partner in her area and I know you will be as excited to read her answers to the interview questions as I am!*

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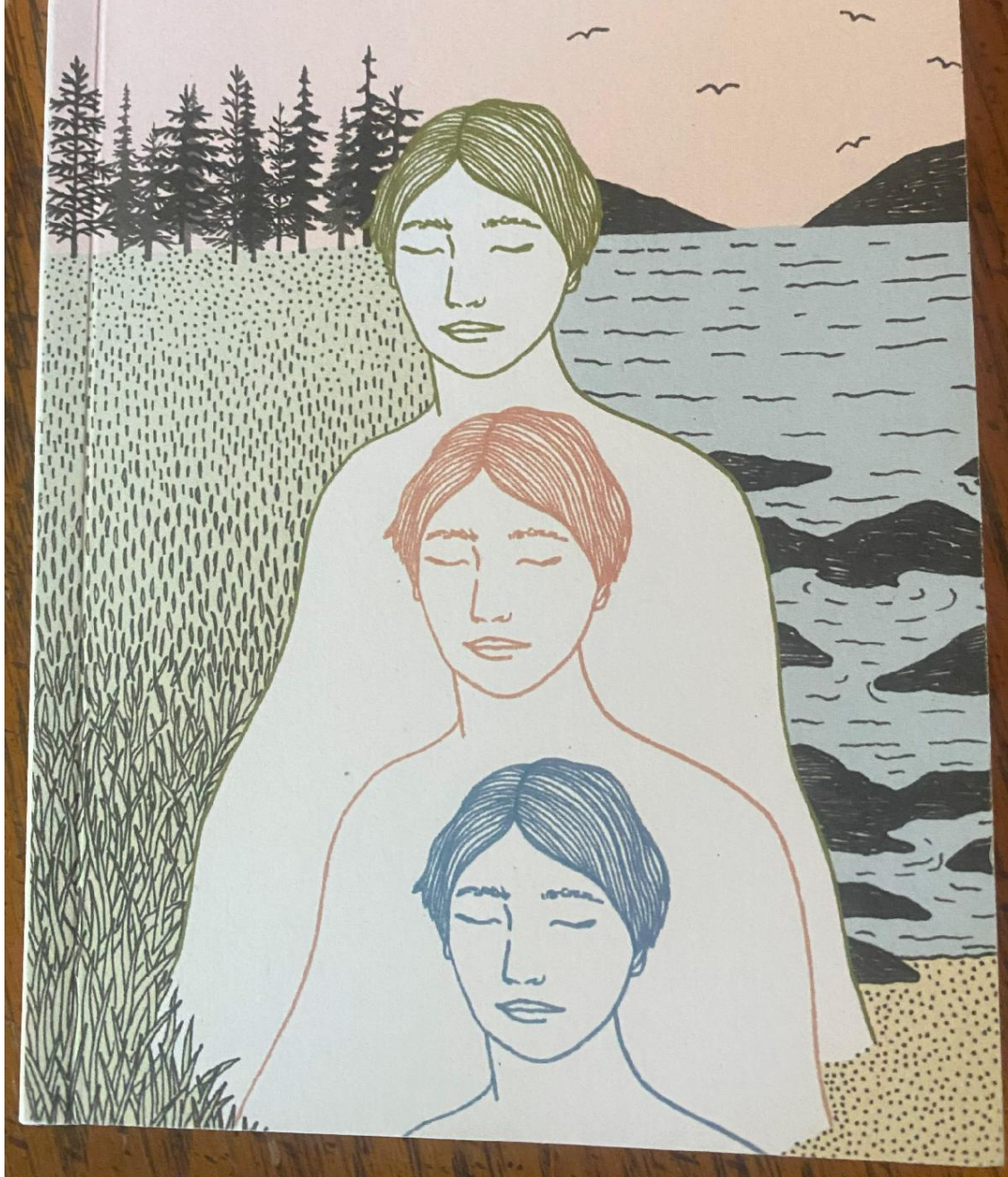


Can you tell us about yourself as a creator? What kind of art do you create? How did you get to this point?

I have always been a writer. When I was young I would draw pictures and tell my mom stories about them, which she'd transcribe. In elementary school, I loved writing and illustrating small books, and then fell in love with writing poetry and essays as I got older. I mostly wrote for school and journaled for myself but was never quite brave enough to share any of my creative writing. For a variety of reasons, I never believed I could pursue writing as a career, so I became a teacher. A few career changes later, one constant is that I am still writing. It's how I process and make sense of life. A short essay of mine was included in a small book called *Living Through Liminality* a few years back. Currently, I'm mostly writing picture books and poetry.

# Living Through Liminality

*A community-created love note*



What are you hoping to get out of SCBWI?

I've already made so many great connections with other kidlit creatives and I hope to continue to make more and deeper connections with others. I hope to keep growing as a writer.

What is the most important thing you have learned as a creator so far?

The most important thing I've learned in my creative practice is that I have to be open

to vulnerability. It's clear when I'm trying to hide behind pretty words or dance around something at arm's length because the work feels superficial, like it has nothing solid on which to grow. On the other hand, when I've brought a full, open heart to the work, it grows into something beyond myself and offers a place for others to connect in meaningful ways. This is what I love most about the power of art.

### **What is the thing you struggle with the most in your creative journey?**

I want to make all the things and I have trouble staying focused. It can be a challenge for me to decide on what projects to prioritize and to push through the messy beginning to complete them. I also work a full time job that is not writing related, so it can be challenging to carve out time for creative work.

### **Who are the creators you look up to?**

I look up to and draw inspiration from so many creatives across so many different art forms – writers, musicians, illustrators, fiber artists, bakers, and so many others. I have pretty eclectic interests. I'm drawn to work that feels alive and deeply meaningful. I like the beautiful, quirky and weird stuff that makes me see something in a new way. I tend to keep long lists of favorites, but some artists that have been inspiring me lately include Beatrice Alemagna, Carson Ellis, Kiran Millwood Hargrave, Celeste Ng, and Lynda Barry.

### **If you could only read one picture book for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?**

This is the hardest question ever! It feels impossible to choose just one because there are so many fantastic books out there. Andrea Gibson's poetry collection, *You Better Be Lightning*, is pretty high on the list of possibilities. The way Andrea writes is raw, honest and profound; they are one of my all-time favorite poets. Another book, which I think everyone should read, is [this version](#) of Pablo Neruda's *Book of Questions* illustrated by Paloma Valdivia. It's absolutely stunning and opened my mind in beautiful new ways. Also, I can't stop telling people how much I love *Julia and the Shark* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave. It's beautiful and heart wrenching and real.

**If you were given an all-expenses-paid trip (including travel, housing, and meals cooked and delivered to your doorstep) to any artist's retreat in the United States—where would you go and what would you do while there? (Let's say, this was a 7-day retreat, you had absolutely no book project deadlines to meet holding you back, and your kids/spouse were going to have as much fun as you do while you're gone—so you'd not be worrying about "other stuff.")**

I would absolutely love to attend one of [Milkwood Farm's workshops](#) in New York. I would spend as much time as possible learning and writing. I'd also probably spend a lot of time outside, walking or just sitting quietly, seeing what ideas rise to the surface.

### **Aside from writing or illustrating, what is your next go-to for a creative outlet?**

My go-tos are embroidery, sewing, weaving, and baking (especially bread). I'm curious

and have a wide variety of interests, so I tend to dabble in trying a lot of new things.

### Where do you get your ideas?

I spend a lot of time outdoors, and draw so much of my inspiration from nature. I'm in the woods as much as possible year round, and it's the place I'm happiest. Many ideas also come from my experiences, family stories, music and visual art.

### Do you have a ritual that helps you get in the mood to create?

I like to go for a walk before sitting down to create. There's something about the movement that opens my mind to ideas or helps me sort out where I'm stuck. I'm lucky enough to have a room in my house that is totally dedicated to creative work. I like to make a cup of tea, light a candle, close the door, and become immersed in my own world.

### Finally, if you could ask just one thing of the next person who is going to be interviewed, what would it be?

What is the *why* that drives you to create?

### Where can we find more of your work/ follow you/ get in touch with you?

My email is [megan.emmot@gmail.com](mailto:megan.emmot@gmail.com), and I'm on instagram [@meganemmot](https://www.instagram.com/meganemmot) and [@amaptojanuary](https://www.facebook.com/amaptojanuary). I'm also on Facebook.

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Thank you so much Megan for letting me interview you! I hope that you, my dear reader, enjoyed learning about another member of our community! Please reach out to Megan to get to know one another and help us build this wonderful region!

Cheers,

Jeanne Bowman  
Montana-IC

SCBWI Montana | 6363 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 425, Los Angeles, CA 90048

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