

David Greenberg Autobiography

I was born in Brooklyn, New York on October 13, 1954. My mother's name is Sema; my father's Jack. I spent the early years of my life in the city, overlooking a river and shipyard, and when I was about 4 or 5 years old moved out to the suburbs, Great Neck, Long Island. I grew up there in a ridiculously large house with a giant backyard, perfect for childhood games and mischief and chasing our dog, and being chased in return.

My parents were definitely major influences. My mom was a lover of language, always reading reading reading, writing writing writing. I can still remember her reading me the OZ stories when I was quite little. A bit older, she read me Rudyard Kipling's JUST SO STORIES. My Dad was a civil rights lawyer (he is now a law school professor) and wrote books on the side, very dry stuff. Where my Mom was very effusive and poetic with words, he was very precise and technical (he still constantly corrects my grammar). But I still vividly remember him reading me Carl Sandburg's ROOTABAGA STORIES, and the fabulous ARCHY AND MEHITABEL poems by Don Marquis. He also read me, I'll never forget, *Gunga Din*, *Fuzzy Wuzzy*, and *Danny Deever*, fabulous poems by Rudyard Kipling.

I was definitely not a social child, not particularly popular, not particularly athletic. My best friend growing up was my dog. It's with her that I really learned to use my imagination, making up all sorts of games, including the ultimate: dog fishing. All you need for this game is a fishing rod (or just a very long piece of string) and a dog biscuit. Tie the dog biscuit to the end of the line and throw it out or cast it out, and let your dog chase it and grab it. Then you just reel that doggy in. If the dog holds tight to the biscuit, you can even spin her through the air around you. They love it, and it strengthens their teeth!

I loved to read as a kid. And there's no question in my mind that my love of reading helped me a great deal to become a writer. Reading familiarizes you with words, so you can therefore write with greater dexterity, coherency, and vocabulary. I also developed, as a teenager, a love for the wilderness, and started my lifelong love for canoeing and wilderness backpacking.

At age 17 I went away to Reed College in Portland, Oregon. I was attracted to Reed merely by the fact that it was in Oregon, which sounded very "wildernessy" to me. I studied Philosophy of Religion there, and, my sophomore year, started keeping a journal. This was when I started writing in a serious way, caring about the craft of writing. I graduated from college, and, after several odd jobs, started my own Chinese eggroll restaurant at a weekend craft fair. During the week, when I wasn't eggrolling, I began volunteering at local schools, helping kids with their reading and writing. I started using the poems I'd been writing in my journal as teaching material for these kids, and found, to my astonishment, that they really seemed to enjoy my writing. This gave me the incentive to write more and more. Eventually I started mailing my poems into publishers, and, after countless rejections, eventually published my first book of poetry when I was 28, SLUGS (Little, Brown & Co.). Since then I've published THE GREAT SCHOOL LUNCH REBELLION, YOUR DOG MIGHT BE A WEREWOLF - YOUR TOES COULD ALL EXPLODE, BUGS!, SKUNKS!, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HUMPTY DUMPTY?, SNAKES!, and THE BOOK OF BOYS FOR GIRLS - THE BOOK OF GIRLS FOR BOYS, DON'T FORGET YOUR ETIQUETTE, CROCS!, and A TUGGING STRING (my first novel).

I have a wonderful son, Sam, born in 1989.

I now live in Portland, Oregon. My hobbies are reading, swimming, cooking, cooking, cooking, ping pong, boogy boarding, and, mainly trying to lead a good, productive, satisfying life.