

## Land ho!

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Although we look - because the sun was in our eyes - like Magellan and his sidekick discovering the Pacific, this is actually me and Paul Janeczko, yesterday at my house. Paul and his wife and daughter Emma joined me and several other friends for lunch.

I had been reading some of Paul's excellent books on the art/craft of writing poetry because that is what Gooney Bird Greene's classroom is doing in the book I'm just finishing. Then I remembered that Paul lived in Maine, and not actually all that far from here. (I had also been reading Lee Bennett Hopkins, and corresponding with Lee, who's an old friend. But Lee lives in Florida, too far for lunch). So I got in touch with him and voila! Fun lunch yesterday.

But: here's the small-world thing. Paul, in explaining to his wife who this unknown person was who had invited them over, said something like "She lives in Bridgton and has a dog, some sort of, ah, something terrier..." (probably he had read this on my website) ..and his wife said, "Tibetan?" and he said, "Yes, how did you know that?" and his wife said, "Because I met her and her dog on the 4th of July."

I had been on the edge of the street watching the funky tiny-town parade that day with my dog and grandsons, when a nice woman came up and asked about the dog and we had a brief conversation, without exchanging names. Paul's wife, Nadine. Who knew?

Middy Thomas, who illustrates the GBG books, was also here yesterday, and after the lunch

group left she and I went into the studio to work out the last details of the pictures for the book. Then she went home, back to Brunswick, Maine, and at 9 PM the phone rang. Middy. "Should she be wearing the tie-dyed sweatshirt in Chapter 1?"

We've had more conversation about the fashions in this book than the content.

Middy thinks Mr. Leroy, the school principal in the book, has a crush on Gooney Bird's second grade teacher, Mrs. Pidgeon. Gasp. *They're both married!* I pointed out to Middy. She shrugged. *These things happen,* she said.

It is very rare, incidentally, for an author and illustrator to collaborate at all. Usually they don't even meet. But Middy and I have been friends for many, many years. One time we hitch-hiked together on the coast of Costa Rica.

Yesterday she asked me if I'd like to go to Lapland with her in December. Lapland??? Actually, I have *been* to Lapland. But *December?* It's dark all day there in December. Not to mention very cold.

Middy is nuts. That's what makes her a great friend.

Tags: Untagged