



A Conversation with Carrie A. Pearson

Author of
A Cool Summer Tail
and *A Warm Winter Tail*

A Cool Summer Tail is a companion to *A Warm Winter Tail*, was it easier or more difficult to write about the summer adaptations?

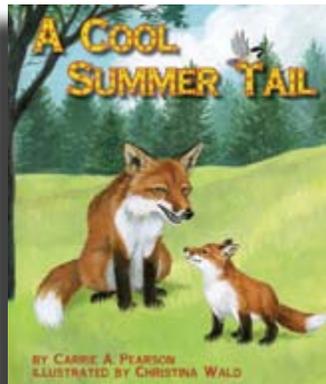
Both. It was easier in that I knew which animals to write about (almost all the same animals as in *A Warm Winter Tail*), but harder because I needed to adhere to the same rhythm and rhyme structure. It was an ultimate word puzzle! I'm glad it turned out like it did and I think readers and educators will enjoy comparing and contrasting adaptations found in both books.

Of the animals featured in the book, do you have a favorite?

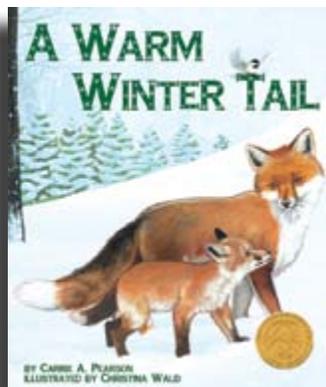
That's like asking if which one of my three daughters is my favorite! :) I love them all for different reasons. The chickadees seem so real, as if I can feel the texture of their feathers. The luminous blue sky behind them is typical of our Upper Peninsula winter. I don't know how Christina Wald (the fabulous illustrator) accomplished this. She created animals and

settings that are natural, true-to-life, and yet, child-friendly and engaging. Brava!

As you researched "A Cool Summer Tail" were there any surprising things you learned that you would have liked to include, but did not make it into the book?



Yes, two adaptations were particularly interesting, but weren't right for the book. 1) squirrels sometimes flip their tails up over their bodies like an umbrella to shade themselves. The lighter underside of the tail doesn't absorb as much heat as the darker top side, and 2) some birds (and camels) will urinate on themselves to dissipate heat. Sounds gross, but it is effective!



Speaking of research what was the most interesting part of your research for "A Warm Winter Tail?"

Because I enjoy spending a lot of time in the woods and am interested in nature, I've collected fun facts about animals my whole life and much to my daughters' chagrin, share them regularly

when we are together in the woods (Carrie: “Did you know an adult deer mouse can fit into an opening the size of a dime?” Daughter: “That’s nice, Mom.”). Seriously, I am in awe of the natural world and how animals adapt to harsh conditions. Researching this book provided an opportunity to delve deeper into their strategies for survival. For instance, I knew Monarch butterflies flew to South America to escape the cold, but I didn’t know that the fourth generation of a butterfly family will fly to the same tree on which the first generation of its family began its northern journey – even though it was never shown the tree by its ancestors. How cool (or warm) is that?



someone giggle, or say, “HmMMM I never thought of that, “when they read something I’ve written.

What is the most frequently asked question you encounter as an author and what is your answer?

Question: “Where do you get your ideas?” Answer: From living life, paying attention, asking questions, reading books, magazines, newspapers, listening to and watching people - especially children - and from watching animals and nature.

What’s coming up next for you?

I’m working on a nonfiction story about the canopy in the coastal redwood tree -- the world’s tallest tree species. It’s exciting to learn about a completely unique ecosystem that is virtually unknown to most people -- including myself.

“A Warm Winter Tail” started it all with Arbordale, what was the inspiration for that book?

One exceptionally cold winter day, I was snowshoeing on the trails by my house. As I walked across a bridge deep in the woods, I noticed a deer watching me. His head was cocked to the side as if he was trying to figure out what I was. I decided I must look strange to him with my hat, mittens, and many layers of clothing. That’s when I had the idea of animals wondering how humans stay warm in the winter.

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What do you most enjoy about writing?

Putting on paper an image, or thought, or way of looking at the world that might not have been described or thought of in that way before - and finding the BEST words to do this. Hearing

