

## What's Your Story, Kristine O'Connell George?

I was born in Colorado and later moved to Texas, Oregon, and Ohio. Six different houses in four different states by the time I started college.



Growing up, one of my favorite possessions was my skate key. I'd tighten my skates onto my Ked's tennis shoes and skate as fast as I could up and down the sidewalks in our neighborhood. On windy days, I'd hold my jacket up like a sail and let the wind push me along. One of my first published poems, "Skating in the Wind," was inspired by this experience.



When I wasn't skating, I headed for my backyard playhouse, which I converted into a laboratory. I loved doing experiments – growing seeds and making concoctions such as stink bombs with my chemistry set.

At school, I was one of the "good kids" and very, very shy. I studied hard, got good grades, and read voraciously. (Voracious: What a funny word! Doesn't it sound like some kind of prehistoric meat-eating beast?)

In the spring, we'd collect tadpoles – something I still do. We had pets: dogs, fish, and a parakeet. One year, an old desert tortoise lumbered into the backyard. I loved camping, fishing, rock hounding, exploring caves, and spending time in Colorado at my grandparent's house.



Now, I live in a rural area in the Santa Monica Mountains in California. There are hawks, coyotes, and an occasional mountain lion. Oddly, we sometimes have peacocks in our front yard.

### Did you play an instrument? Which one(s)?

*I took piano lessons for many years although I wasn't very good. Recitals terrified me! At my last recital, I played "The Spinning Song" at warp speed and returned to my seat in record time. The teacher wasn't pleased, but the other kids were -- I was the last player and everyone wanted to get to the cookies!*

### Did you have a nickname and if so what is it? Is there a story behind your nickname?

*My nickname was, 'Sprinter' because I walk so fast and was always walking ahead of everyone else.*

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

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*scientist. A drummer in a rock and roll band!*

**If you weren't a writer, what would you like to be?**

*A brain researcher or someone who helps people recover from brain injuries. I'm fascinated at how our brains work.*

**Do you have a special place where you write your books?**

*I like to work outdoors – on my patio, in a park, under a tree. My dog, Riley, often keeps me company while I'm working.*



**Have you ever thrown a manuscript away?**

*Rarely -- I tend to save everything. I have an old map cupboard that is packed with manuscripts and scribbles.*



**Do you listen to music while you write, or do you like silence?**

*I like music, but almost always work in silence. That's because I read my poems aloud to myself as I'm writing.*

**Do you have any children or pets and have you ever used them in a book?**

*[Little Dog Poems](#) and [Little Dog and Duncan](#) were inspired by dogs I loved. There are poems about other dogs I loved in [The Great Frog Race](#) and [Toasting Marshmallows](#).*

### **Quick Picks: Choose 4 – 5**

• **Favorite stationary item?**

*Creamy white paper with no lines. Beautiful journals. Drawing paper. Pens that write with thin, black ink. Smudgy drawing pencils. (Oh, was I supposed to choose only one item?)*

• **Dog, Cat, Bird, or Fish?**

*Dog! Dog! Dog! Woof!*

• **Favorite or least favorite vegetable?**

*Frozen lima beans. They are dry and wrinkled. Bleech!*

• **Love revision or hate it?**

*LOVE revision. (Mostly!)*

• **Early Bird Writer or Night Owl?**

*Actually, both. Sometimes, I work very late at night. Sometimes, I'm already writing when the sun comes up.*