

What's Your Story, Melissa Sweet?



I grew up in New Jersey in a neighborhood filled with kids. We all raced around town on our bicycles (decked out with banana seats and moustache handle bars), and often ended up at Percy's candy store. A nickel or a dime would buy a big handful of penny candy. I always got red licorice twizzlers as long as shoelaces. Percy's store was where I bought Archie and Veronica comic books, too.

As a kid I liked making things and selling them to our neighbors. They all were kind enough to buy whatever it was I was selling—potholders, Christmas ornaments or tissue paper flowers. But my most successful “business” was a donut delivery route--sort of like a newspaper route, but instead I delivered donuts. On Saturday afternoons, I would

go around to all the neighbors, take their donut order and collect 25cents for the delivery charge. Then, early on Sunday morning I rode my bike to the bakery and stuffed my bicycle baskets with bags of donuts. After I got home, my family dove into our bag of cinnamon crullers. It was the best morning of the week and I made at least \$4.00, which seemed like a ton of money back then.



Now I live in Maine and I ride my bike as often as I can. Everyday I go to my studio to work on my books. I have 2 rescue dogs, Rufus and Nellie, who are always there with me. I still love to make things (though I don't ask my neighbors to buy them!). Even after all this time being artist, sometimes feel like I'm just beginning, just warming up.



Did you have a best friend? Who was it and why were you best friends?

My best friend Janie lived across the street. We did everything together. Janie had a trampoline and I thought that was the best thing a kid could have. She didn't have any pets but I had 3 dogs. We both loved bouncing back and forth between our houses. Her father owned a delicatessen in town and whenever we went there we could have any snack we wanted! Her father always called me “apples”

because my cheeks were (and are) pretty rosy.

What were your favorite things to do when you were young?

I had tons of art “kits”—paint by number, colorforms, a spirograph—you name a kit, I had it. My parents had to stock on up on them to keep up with me.



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

My place of choice, at any time, is my studio. I have everything I need in there—my favorite books, art supplies, music and time. There is a big green chair I curl up in to do my writing. That's often where I get ideas for new books, and it's where I take a nap!

