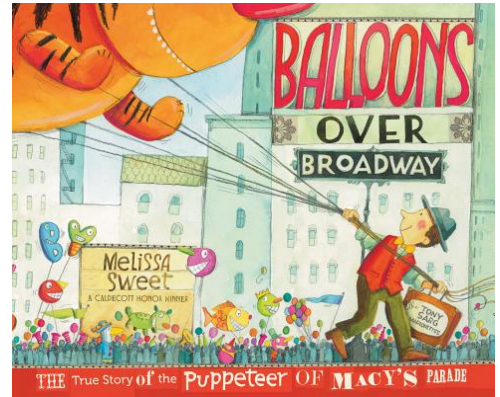


YOUR FRIEND, MELISSA SWEET (A Letter to Readers)

Dear Reader,

I'm thrilled you are reading [BALLOONS OVER BROADWAY](#). My family always watched the Macy's Day parade with the huge balloons bobbing through New York City, but I never thought about who actually made the balloons.

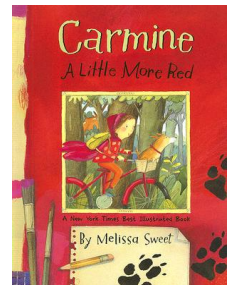


When I first learned about Tony Sarg as a puppeteer and illustrator, I found out he was the man who also invented the Macy's parade balloons. I had a million questions! When did that happen? Why — was he hired to do it or was it for fun? And how did he make them? I knew I had to do a book about him, but since no one had written about him before, I had to piece together the story of his life.



During the time I was researching and writing, I decided to make toys and puppets, just like Tony Sarg did. I've always liked to make things and I have a lot of materials in my studio--children's blocks, fabric, old toys and bits of things to play with. That turned out to be the best thing I could have done because it helped me think about his life as puppeteer might have been like. Everything you see in *Balloons Over Broadway* are the things I made (only there were about 10 times more that I could not fit in the book!).

Writing does not come easily to me. I never thought I would write a book until I wrote [CARMINE](#). I've learned that if I edit and keep going, slowly the story begins to unfold.



Then it starts to get exciting. I really believe that making pictures and playing with materials helps me know what to write about. Writing and making art should be fun, so I like to “play” in the studio as much as I can.



That's one thing I love about Tony Sarg-- he had so much fun doing what he did--he didn't worry if something didn't work or turn out as he planned. He'd just try again. I like to think that now people will know him and be inspired to try to make things—just for the fun of it.

Your friend,

[Melissa](#)