

## A CONVERSATION WITH JOYCE SIDMAN

### What inspired you to write your award-winning book?

I love color in a visceral way, and I think most children do, too. It is no accident that every child has a favorite color instead of, say, a favorite letter or insect. Color has the power to affect emotions, to lift spirits; and lack of color—like the gray days of November—dampens everything. I simply wanted to celebrate my love of color and the seasons with others.

### What research did you undertake in writing *Red Sings from Treetops*?

Daily walks in the woods throughout the year, using all my senses!

### What interesting challenges did you encounter in writing the book?

There were two main challenges: one, to convey the strength and depth of what I was feeling; and two, to find language that was fresh and new, since several good books about color have already been written for children.

### What do you hope your readers take away from *Red Sings from Treetops*?

A feeling of joy at the splendor of the world around them. Or, at the very least, a

nod to that cardinal, singing his heart out at the top of a nearby tree.

### What do you like most about the book?

I am thrilled with the richness of the illustrations. Pamela Zagarenski captured the feeling of the book so well—and added infinitely more. She created a magical world in which there are windows in trees, birds wearing crowns, and whales floating through the night sky. And she makes us believe in it.

### What was your journey to becoming a published author?

From early on, I felt compelled to write. Words came into my head, and I wrote them down. I think a lot of writers are like this. Writing helps us understand the world; we'd be lost without it. I rediscovered children's literature after sharing it with my own children. It was a long road to publication, but now I am very lucky to be working with an editor who encourages me.

### How do you most enjoy spending time when you're not writing?

I teach about 4-5 weeks a

year as a writer in residence at local schools, which I love. Kids are natural poets, and their creativity and exuberance delight me. I also volunteer at Children's Hospital in Minneapolis, distributing library books to hospitalized children. Beyond that, I love dogs, gardens, chocolate—and reading, of course!

  
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Minnesota

Novel & Short Story

Poetry

Young People's Literature

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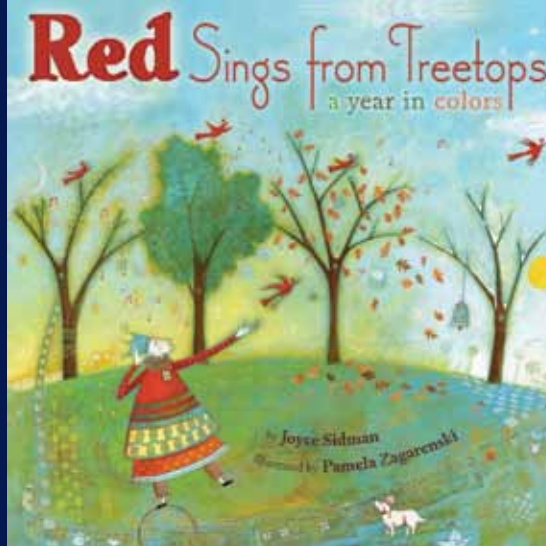
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22ND ANNUAL

  
**MINNESOTA BOOK AWARDS**

**Children's Literature Winner**

*Category sponsored by Books for Africa*



***Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors***

by Joyce Sidman,  
illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

# Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors



## SUMMARY:

This imaginative book describes the changing colors of the seasons with beautiful poems and vivid illustrations that bring colors to life. Blue dances on summer lakes, green drips from spring leaves, and black wafts mysteriously through autumn evenings. Color becomes more than something visual; it becomes something that can be felt, heard, tasted or smelled.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which is your favorite season, and why? What colors do you associate with that time?
2. Why do you think the author began the book with spring? What season would you begin with, and why?
3. What is your favorite color and why?
4. Do you think the rain can really “taste green”? What color do you think rain tastes like?
5. Why do you think the characters are wearing crowns?
6. What role do you think the cardinal plays in the book?
7. The author wrote the book in a style that’s called poetry. What is poetry?
8. If you wrote a book for children, what would you write about?
9. What is your favorite page in the book, and why?
10. If you illustrated *Red Sings from Treetops*, what would your pictures look like?



## ABOUT JOYCE SIDMAN

Joyce Sidman is the award-winning author of two Caldecott Honor books, *Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors* and *Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems*, as well as other fine books of poetry for children. She lives in Wayzata with her family. Joyce’s favorite color is the soft green of early spring.

Visit [www.joycesidman.com](http://www.joycesidman.com) to learn more about the author and her work.



Photo by Scott Streble



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