

55:10

Interview Notes : KPFA (Adam David Miller)

1977 Jan. 11

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86/97
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How get into writing - for as long as I can. ^① always write down important

As child - wrote stories in brown wrapping paper ^{BL}

1/77 KPFA

kept journal of important events

1st serious writing ^{begin} NYC - adult

after Smith - short stories - NYC, At, Harpers ^{revised 7 files}

finally sold to Woman's Day

articles for Army → sent to Japan

- Took a class in writing for children

1st book Dancing Kettle, was published

- everything ^{came} together - began to get published

- when you're starting you just

have to believe in yourself + plan in

Early Influences: - Totality - warm loving home

- parents - (espec. mother) - they provided

a book-oriented atmosph - mother read

to us, brought bks for us, also read

much herself → poet.

- she wrote - kept diaries, journals

- m + d ^{many friends, letters, postcards} - volunteered correspondence

great letter-writers - & written

word always part of my life.

- always supportive to me.

- Actually, Totality of my life as a

Japanese-Am. - I p. no values, feelings,

memories ^{visitors} all a part of me - ∴ part of my writing

when did I accept self as writer -

- Gradual awareness ^{realization} that maybe I'd

make it as a writer. ^{sup. of feelings}

② With public's 1st bk - Dancing Kettle.

③ When F. Fdn awarded grant to

spend 2 yrs - Japan to write +

research mat'l - they

believed in me as a writer.

③ Japan — folk art movement — ②
began articles — in N. Times & after
I ret'd re craftsmen.

Each new phase of writing adds to your
confidence as a writer learned to do.

④ 15 yrs ago — stopped office work —
decided 10k/yr — fully committed
to writing. Tax form — occ'n: writer

Now eat: — for many yrs I did office work,
secretarial & wrote — Then circumstance
in life allowed me to write without
being totally dependent on bk royalties.
Sad commentary on creative life —
Have to live spartan life on royalties
even @ 20 k. — so out & print.

Smith: spent 1 yr getting M.Ed — after Joppy,
Laught: 1 yr — Susan Schorr — but realized
teaching was too demanding — consumed
me 24 hrs. had no time to write.
Did sec'l work

Trip to Japan: — major milestone in my life.

went to collect mat'l for writing —
But learned so much about Japan & the
Jpnese way of life — ~~their traditional culture~~,
every day life, being in Jpnese homes →
mat'l for Ch's books.

Became aware of ^{mind perspective} new world — Folk arts, crafts
& Japan, got to know Hanada, Kawai, &
Yanagi — founder of F.A. Movement.

unpretentious ^{women} men — made J. aware of
beauty of simple, functional art & people
Zen learning — bel. in oneness of man
Kawai: "I am you, the you that only I can see."

Bd Life ~~force~~ = unknown self - ③
This force works thru n hands - body
to was the unconscious element in
everyone that helped him creative

Hamada - bel. that you can't create - b.
beautiful by consciously striving for that
goal w. a mind; only when a made
so many pots that, finally the body
- hands make the pot - then it is
beautiful. Led me to create - Rodabie
- ~~Used this idea in writing~~ Rodabie
incorporate smthg. n philosophy.

after Japan
Childhood Books

after Japan: Folk tale → M.H.C. - Sea of Gold.
I liked universality of folk tale -
draw people together - of their

Then about books about G.P. in Japan.

- Dispel - stereotypic image of Japan
faded, picturesque, exotic country
inscrutable orientals -

- Write of Japan as human beings - hopes,
aspirations, joys → universal.

- also write of daily lives, feelings, traditions
that are uniquely Japanese. values

~~many of pie bks~~ ~~from S.H.~~
stereotyped Takao - potter, Meiya - priest. Promt -
father who do G.O. hands. nursery

- Pie bks: S.S. Hagg, S.G. T. Exp, Forever Known
Have a character who is old valleys true
~~old~~ depict warm rel'n ship betw.

- Young + old - write of old & who
are interesting, strong, independent

Healthy old ch. to ~~show~~ be aware that friends
don't have to be peers - but can be gg.
- ~~Don't~~ want to moralize

~~Introduction~~
 ~10 yrs ago - Goals began to change -
 world changed - dev. of ethnic
 awareness - Samuel - want to know
 re historical roots, parents / g. parent
 proud of heritage - want feelings / goal
 defined by father's dream, knows it
 means to be a man.

- want to reinforce self-knowledge
 Journey to Texas - fictional afc v/d
 happened to me + my family +
 incarcerated in conv. camp + w/d.
 sister - student, quiet

Issai: - strong, courageous - endured
 love + dignity + grace - helped keep as
 from destroying ourselves + bitterness -
 always - dream - sharing + joy -
 day by day quiet courage shown by him
Samuel: Wakarusa Col. - 1869 -
 estab tea + silk farm.

most recent Bles - Berta Victor - young
 J.A. child in Calif - won 30's - ~~st~~
 convey sense of family, +
 gentleness + innocence v/d days -
 she is Victor 2 - sp. - spoil her
 B'day - but she is pleasantly surprising!

Rooster: J.A. child - friendship + little
 put meyo + older woman - problem arising
 76 Imvey feelings of J. home.
 (evoked) - began 10 yrs ago - reverts 34y

Adult novel - about an Issai woman's life
 still searching for a publisher.

History of Sep. Church: - 70th ann'y -
 strength - Issai - built church +
 self-sufficient in 1918
 on meager income - met in Petta

Illus:- illus 2 of my own - but ⑤
not trained - Editor has access to
artist in NYC ^{unfortunately} ~~early days~~
~~accepted~~ decision - ~~but~~ always
insisted the drawings not caricatures
of Spence face - Lately, have asked
to see sketches; ~~reports~~ ^{of artists'}
interpretation of story, but for
check accuracy of details - esp
relatg to Spence background of figs.
make suggestions.

Pub. for children -

- o Today - very interesting field (no
more taboos on subject matter) -
recent emphasis on realism, no more
protective - only to unlike adulted.
- o I think even if story & situation ends -
tragedy - must hold out some sense of
hope & purpose.

- o I think some people feel writing for
ch. is ~~somehow~~ somehow takes less
effort & skill - writing for adults.
- couldn't be more mistaken.

I never do less than my best & writing
for children. One never writes down to
ch. - they're perceptive, honest, intelligent.
- you have to write with integrity & honesty
for them too. n

- a good ch bk is as entg. to an
adult as a child. There's
always a person behind the mask of childhood.

o honesty

- How perceive role as writer?

(6)

- I'd like to write books that have an enduring quality

^{Spencer}
^{Porter} For young people - I want to write books that will be a mind-expanding exper. - Open up worlds that are valid & enriching

- I'd like to transmit ^{positive life values} some sense of the values I cherish without moralizing, brutality & T.V.

I'll continue to write about the young people ^{and} because I think there's a need ^{there} but

^{To make}
^{and}
^{valued}
^{writing}
^{for}

- also want to write of our common humanity & present a

^{cheer}
^{never}
^{over}
^{put} positive view of ~~young~~ giving grounds for hope & purpose.
• a positive affirmation of life.

next book - ~~three~~ ^{cat} ~~pp~~ - Am fairly depressed
talked to older three - including ^{James}
exper. "Anger Dreams"

How start? *As far back as I can remember:*

KPFA - 1-11-77
ADAM MILLER
"The Sound of Silence"

Always liked to write, anything deeply felt impelled to write down - journal.
About 10, wrote stories, on brown wrap. paper booklets

Serious writing as adult began in NYC, doing sec'l work
Wrote short stories - NYer, At, Harp, notes on rejection slips. M. Foley, Workshop, Columbia
SOLD 1st story to WOMAN'S DAY, ARMY Reorientation Division, ARTICLES.
Workshop, ch. lit, New School - Collection of 1st adaptn Folk tales to Ed. - DANCING KETTLE

In NYC - just plunged in, things began to happen.

EARLY Influences:

TOTALITY of *my experience* affects *my* writing. but
Very early influences was my parents - provided WARM, LOVING, BOOK ORIENTED environment for me. *ext. post*
Euphon - sense values - caring about other human beings
MOTHER, often read to us, bo't bks for us, also read great deal herself. POET - see her scribbling poems, keeping diary and journals.

Parents also great LETTER WRITERS - voluminous corres. - WRITTEN WORD always imp't part of my life

Always very supportive of my work; sent copies of whatever I wrote, exp'd happiness/pride when pub.

WHEN ACCEPT SELF AS WRITER:

Think it was a kind of gradual awareness that dev'd

1. When 1st bk, DANCING KETTLE was publ, began to be hopeful about being a writer. (*research/writing*)
2. When FORD FDN awarded grant - 2 yrs in Japan. Realized they believed in me as a writer
3. In Japan, dev. int. in folk art movement and did series of articles for Nip. Times ...

EACH NEW PHASE of writing added to my confidence as a writer. *expanded self awareness*

Finally, ab. 15 yrs ago, stopped office work, decide to write one book/yr. - fully committed.

When on tax form blank for Occupation - ~~RM~~ Instead of Secy/Writer - put writer! final commitment.


CONSEQ; How Live?

Circumstances of my life were such that I wasn't totally dependent on book royalties. *hadn't started*
Sad commentary on creative life, that even with 20 pub bks, spartan life if try to live on roy. only.
T.V. a film - not less creative - &

affected outlook
Parents provided many enriching exper.

No baby sitters - took us everywhere -
concerts, museums, sometimes Opera...

Also recall having endless stream of
visitors to our home... Parents grad.
of ^{Calvin} Univ in Kyoto, think every alumnus
who ever set foot in Am. came to our
house for dinner.... Seems we had a
constant parade of visitors from Japan..
Ministers, seminary students, Father's
business associates... I hated it as a
child, but now they provide wonderful
material for my writing.



TRIP TO JAPAN:

-2-

Major milestone in my life. Gave me NEW INSIGHTS about Jpnse people, their trad'ns, values, daily life. Enabled me to write many books for children re young people of Jpn.

~~More~~ Besides, period of tremendous ENRICHMENT Personally. Opened whole new field of int. in Jpnse folk art/ handcrafts. Was fortunate enuf to meet 3 men who founded folkart movement. SHOJI HAMADA, ^{whiter} Kanjro KAWAI (potters) and Soetsu Yanagi (^{philosophy} ~~philosophy~~ ^{sed} ~~sed~~).

They taught me many things - I wrote long article later book re KAWAI, Philosopher/potter - steeped in ZEN. Transl. some of his poems: "I am you, the you that only I can see." Spoke of a LIFE FORCE, UNKNOWN SELF, which worked thru hand/body enabling anyone to create beautiful things.

Also wrote articles re HAMADA: ^{work faster} ^{flow} ~~Felt we can't~~ ^{couldn't} create beaut'l pot by consciously striving for it with the mind; that only when he'd made 100's of pots and the hands/body, rather than mind were at work, then, the beaut'l pot would be created.

My ~~FIRST~~ ^{first} Picture book ROKUBEI and ~~DOOO~~ ^{DOOO} RICE BOWLS incorporates these concepts. of H and Kawai.

After JPAPAN:

Many articles re local craftsmen + review for CH ^(Am Craft Council)

^(Made pottery jewelry myself - spreading) ~~Wrote about 12 books for ch. about Japan.~~

- FOLK TALES: MLC ~~and~~ (Illus), SEA of Gold.

— Universality - draw people together - gd thing

- GROUP of about 12 about Y.P. in Japan

DISPEL STEREOTYPIC IMAGE of Japan, quaint, picturesque, exotic country - inscrutable & orientals.

JPNSE AS HUMAN BEINGS - hopes, aspir'ns, dreams - universal; Also of DAILY LIVES, FEELINGS, TRAD'NS, VALUES, UNIQUELY JPNSE.

Fathers whithwork with their hands; not white collar - TAKAO- potter, MIYA - priest, P.Y.P carnation grower.

- PICTURE BOOKS - SSH, S,G, TOKYO Exp, FOR. XMAS, Village life, each has old character. Another stereotype of elderly as bland, weak, unint'g.

^{vital} My old people, strong, independent interesting. Reflect Jpnse attit. twd aged. Good for ch. to think all friends don't have to be peers - 99 yrs.

ABOUT 10 YEARS ago, goals began to change somewhat -3-
World began to change. dev. of ETHNIC AWARENESS.

SANSEI - wanted to know re hisotrical roots, parent grandparents, proud of heritage. THEY WANTED FEELINGS AND GOALS DEFINED BY FELLOW ASIAN, WHO KNOWS HOW IT FEELS TO BE ASIAN. ct
WANTED to REINFORCE their self-knowledge, pride, respe
Began wrting re Jpnse exper. in Calif.

JOURNEY TO TOPAZ: fictional acc't - family. during wartime incarceration in concentration camps. EVENT such a staggering tragedy, ~~was a tragedy~~ instead of writing a strident diatribe, wanted to write of quiet day by day courage of Jpnse, esp. Issei.

ISSEI - strong, courageous, *enduring in spite of hostility*, endured evac. with grace and dignity. Helped us to keep from self-destruction by becoming *resister* mired in bitterness.

→ *compassion, humor* with values that sustained them
SAMURAI: Wakamatsu Colony 1869 - fac. based fact.

Recent pic books: BIRTHDAY VISITOR - young JA chil who thinks birthday will be spoiled - wanted to convey sense of Jpnse family, *in a time that was* more gentle and innocent.

ROOSTER: just pub'd, friendships of young and old & how Miyoko helps Mrs. K. solve problem. Prob and feelings universal - but Wanted to EVOKE sense of Jpnse home and Jpnse ~~values~~ feelings.

ADULT WRITING:

Ch have good time while ready
NOVEL - began 10 years ago, rewrote 3 yrs ago, Issei woman's life in the US. still no publisher.

incredible
HISTORY of SYCAMORE CHURCH: commem. 70th anny, realized how hard Issei worked, gave sacrificall; to establ church, to become self-sustaining in 1918.

ARTICLE RE DEPATTA in Oakl. Museum Catalogue for re~~s~~rospective show.

Illustrations: Illus 2 of own, prefer prof'ls

Usually Ed and I work together. *selecting artist*

MAIN CONCERN to get an attist who can draw Jpnse faces without caricaturing them.

Recently, after some diffies, ask to see SKETCHES.

Not to challenge artist's interpretation - creative person also; but to check for accuracy of Jpnse background and details.

Publishing for Children:

Now, fascinating field. Recent emph on REALISM
Can touch on any subject. ~~Only~~ But I feel, no
matter how DEVASTATING or TRAGIC the sit'n, feel
it imp't to leave ch with some sense of HOPE and
not just RAGE or ~~frustration~~ *desperation*.

Wonderful time for ETHNIC WRITERS. Publishers eager
for ethnic books on lists. Stories in ANTHOLOGIES,
(Scribner's Anth, Scott Foresman - stories) text-
book READERS...

- ① Some feel writing for ch. TAKES LESS EFFORT AND
SKILL, Disparaging notion re children's lit.
Couldn't be more mistaken.. Ch. are PERCEPTIVE,
intelligent, SENSE PHONY immediately.
CAN NEVER WRITE DOWN TO CHILDREN... I NEVER DO LESS
THAN MY VERY BEST WHEN WRITING FOR CHILDREN. Must
write with honesty and integrity. Diff level, but
QUALITY has to be just as ~~good~~ *high*.
A GOOD CHILDREN'S BOOK is as interesting to an
adult as it is to a child.

Perceive ROLE AS WRITER:

Since most of mat'l for young people.

Hope to write books that will be MIND EXPANDING
EXPERIENCE ... OPEN UP WORLDS THAT ARE VALID
AND ENRICHING. .. to counteract all the violence
and brutality on TV

CHILDREN NEED MANY VIEWPOINTS: *In myself -*
them a positive viewpoint - ~~give them grounds~~
warm human relationships - give them grounds
for HOPE AND PURPOSE and POSITIVE AFFIRMATION
OF LIFE.... without ~~moralizing~~ *about it*

Because I'm J-Am, I want to continue writing about
the Jpnse-Ams, for both adults and children...
think I can make strongest statement as a writer
by writing ~~about~~ *my* the JPNSE *Am Experience*.

But in final analysis, I want to CELEBRATE OUR
COMMON HUMANITY... because for me, that's what
it's all about.

Read "Uncle Harlan's Black Cat"

Next book:

J-Am family in Calif during depression. Talked *20 min*
to older Nisei.. incorporating some of the ir
exp. "A jar of dreams."

How did you get into writing?

As far back as I can remember, I've always liked to write. When I was about 10, I remember writing short stories ~~and~~ on brown wrapping paper and making them into small books. (Disc'd easiest way to get a book produced ~~was~~ to make it yourself)

when living in NYC - Took short story seminar at Col.

My first serious writing as an adult was in the area of adult short stories. They were all stories about Japanese in this country, ~~making with some~~

~~Some~~ Some were childhood reminiscence pieces, some about the Issei... ~~all of them~~

I tried sending them to the NYer, Atlantic monthly, Harpers.... collected dozens of rejection slips but after a few years, I began to get little hand scribbled notes on the printed slips, and finally, one editor at the NYer even asked me to come in to see her. But ~~nothing~~ nothing came of that, and I eventually ~~only~~ sold one short story to Woman's Day.

And I did sell several articles about the JA's to the Army Information and reorientation div. which they translated and sent to Japan after the war.

About the same time, I was beginning to write for children. Took a class at the New School for Social Research - studied with Hildegard Swift

So I guess I began to write seriously after the war when I was in NYC

Began by writing both adult & ch - & also wrote Just plums in. You have to believe in yourself. ~~not get discouraged~~ ~~rejection~~

What were some early influences on my work. Strongest influence?

- Probably my parents, and especially my mother. because they provided a life that was very book-oriented. She often read Jpnse stories to my sister and me when we were young, she bought us books, and always did a great deal of reading herself. She was also a poet, and I used to see her writing and scribbling notes to herself.. she also kept a diary and a journal.... And I started quite early in life doing that as well. Whenever I had an experience I felt deeply, I felt impelled to write it down. ~~journal~~ (She and my dad were great letter writers, had a voluminous correspondence ... so the written word was very much a part of my life.)

- But looking back, the totality of my life as a Japanese, the Jpnse values I learned, the traditions of Japan that we maintained... the sense of being Jpnse was very strong... and so everything that I was, the Jpnse visitors we always seemed to have... all

Looking back, I'd say the totality of my life as a Jpnse - the ~~many~~ Jpnse traditions and values and feelings in my life.. the people I knew... the qualities I value... are all a part of me and therefore a part of my writing.

When did I decide to accept myself as a writer... and How make the decision:

published my first book, the Dancing Kettle

- I guess when I received ~~the~~ A Ford Fdn Fellowship to go to Japan to ~~study~~ pursue my writing. Because then, I was able to stop working for a living and devote two years to living in Japan, researching another collection of folk tales (had already published Dancing Kettle), and I realized then that someone really had ~~faith in me~~ enough faith in ~~me~~ as a writer to give me a grant.

Then while I was in Japan, I became very much interested in the Jpnse folk art movement and in folk arts and crafts and did a series of articles for the Nippon Times, ~~and~~ about craftsmen, and when I returned, I did a many articles for CRAFT HORIZONS. This opened up a whole new area of interest for me in handicrafts ... and interest I still maintain, next to ~~my writing~~.

Only from about 15 years ago, did I concentrate fulltime on writing books for children, and from then I guess I became a fulltime writer and now try to do ~~at least~~ one book a year. → on I put down write

Most have to eat and live? How?

I was fortunate in having another source of income. For a long time, I worked in offices and as a secretary just for bread and butter... and then ~~when I finally~~ circumstances in my life allowed for me to write fulltime, so I wasn't totally dependent on my royalties for income.

Sad commentary on the creative life, that even today with 20 published books, I would have to live a very spartan life if I had to depend solely on my royalty income from my books. Unless one has a bestseller or sells to the films.

~~Sell - Publishing for children~~

Trip to Japan was a major milestone in my life.

I not only became aware of the whole new field of handcrafts and folk art, I also had an opportunity to live in Jpnse homes, get to know the Jpnse as people, observe their daily lives and routines... and this gave me tremendous amount of material for writing books ~~about~~ for children about Japan.

Meeting Kawai, Hamada and Yanagi, founders of the folk art movement in Japan, was really a mind-expanding experience for me. They ~~xxxxxx~~ made J aware of the strength and beauty of simple functional rural crafts ... and they encouraged the work of these unknown craftsmen. ... they ~~werexalixxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ all. They were very unpretentious men... their ~~xxxx~~ philosophy leans toward Zen buddhism, ~~alixxxxxxx~~... they believe in the oneness of life ... Kawai used to say.

I am you, the you that only I can see.

The moon in me looks up at the moon.

The moon that looks, looks back at herself.

He believed in a life force which he called the unknown self. The unknown self revealed itself thru the hands and the body and is that Unconscious element in every man that prods him on to new achievements. and creativity.

Hamada, believed that only by making hundreds of pots can you eventually create one good one. ... That when you are too self-conscious about trying to create something beautiful, it won't work. The body has to do the work

and ~~has~~ to writing Rokubei

unlike body makes it -
rather than mind

Goals in my writing
Books for children:

Early books ~~were~~ included a collections of Jpnse folk tales - I liked their universality, the sense of drawing people together... which I think is good

Then I did a group of books about the ~~xxxxxx~~ young people in Japan. I wanted to dispel some of the stereotypic images adults and ch. had of Japan as a picturesque, quaint, exotic country peopled by inscrutable orientals.... I wanted to write of the Jpnse as human beings, with hopes and aspirations that are universal... and also to write of their daily lives, including the feelings and values and traditions that are uniquely Jpnse. ~~xxxxxx~~ many of the picture books are about children in small villages, and in most of them I write of warm relationships betw. the young and the old. ~~xxxxxx~~ Old people are so often depicted in books as bland, inactive, uninteresting.... there merely as grandparnets I like to write of old people that are strong, independent and interesting.

Don't lose the overall feeling

About 10 yrs ago, my goals began to change, along with the change in our society and an increasing awareness of ethnic communities. I found that the sansei wanted to know about their historical roots, about how their parents and grandparents lived, they were proud of their heritage and they wanted to have their goals and feelings defined for them by an Asian who knows what it means to be Asian...

can't
99
+6
put 9

So I began to write books about the Jpnse exper. in Calif...

1st I wrote JOURNEY... which is a fictionalized acct of what happened to my family during the wartime incarceration of the Jpnse of the west coast

Then I wrote SAMURAI... which is a fictionalized account of the wakamatsu colony the first Jpnse to come to ~~xxxx~~ the USA in 19 69...

And then I did two picture books for young children about J-A children, because there are so few pic books for that age group dealing with Jpnse.

And at the same time, I worked on an adult novel about an Issei woman and her life in the US, which still hasn't found a publisher. And also did a history of our Japanese church Sycamore Cngl church in El Cerrito. Learned a great deal about the strength and endurance of the early Jpnse Xns. They built ~~and~~ their own church and became selfsupporting in as early as 1918.... remarkable when one thinks of what their meagre income was in these days.

The incarceration was in itself I think, staggering in its tragedy.. the story I wanted to tell was of the quiet day by day courage shown by the Jpnse during this upheavl, and esp. of the dignity and grace with which the Issei accepted it. without bitterness.

endured with courage

Illus. & Publishing for ch. here.

Next book? Just completed a book for young people about a Jpnse family during the depression years. Talked to some older Nisei, learned of their experiences and incorporated that into a story.

Issei: ~~xxxxxx~~ I've been close to many Issei and admire so much their courage, their strength, their endurance in the face of so many difficulties in a hostile society. ~~They~~ I want to write of their strength of the values that sustained them, and of the dignity and grace with which they faced so many hardships... they've kept a sense of compassion... Would like somehow to convey their spirit in some of my books...

I usually include one or two Issei characters in most of my books.

~~xxxxxxx~~ How do I perceive my role as a writer... How do I

At this point, ~~xxxx~~ altho I've done many stories and a novel for adults, the main thrust of my work is in the area of books for young people. All of my books have been about the Jpnse, and I hope to continue writing books about the Jpnse.... but ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I'm not writing exclusively for the Jpnse, I want to write about our common humanity, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and when writing for young people, I think it's important to write the kinds of books that will give them grounds for hope and a sense of purpose in life, ~~xxxxxxx~~

~~xxxxxx~~ At this point, the major portion of my published work has been for young people - and what I hope to do is to write books that will be a mind-expanding experience for them, I'd like to open up worlds that are valid and enriching ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for them... And I suppose, I'm trying to strike back at all the violence and brutality thrust upon us by television - and so I try to write of warm relationships between human beings - and present a constructive viewpoint that will give grounds for hope and purpose in life.

Main thing is to write of our common humanity and a positive affirmation of life. - *without moralizing* -

Illustrations: I did illustrate two of my books, but since I'm not trained professionally, most of the books are illustrated by artists in the NY area. In the early books, I didn't exercise much influence, altho perhaps I could have. But after a few unfortunate experiences with artists who hadn't researched details of clothing and background.... I now ask to see the sketches if possible. And when I do, of course I can't question the artistic integrity or interpretation of the illustrator - but can make suggestions where there are inaccuracies about details, esp. those that pertain to Jpnse things.

before publication What it's like to publish for children: I think that ~~children's~~ publishing for children has become a fascinating field today, because there are no more taboos - one can write about almost any subject today because of recent emphasis on realism in children's literature. *death, sex, divorce, race*

But unlike adult fiction, I think that ch's literature must hold out some sense of hope even if the endings are tragic.

Contrasts of course are entirely different from adult field.

But as far as the quality of the writing goes, one never writes down to children... I work just as hard.... for the right words and images and feelings, in writing for children as I do for my adult writing. I think there's a misconception, among many adults - even those who write that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ writing for children somehow takes less skill, and that therefore one is less of a writer - but that kind of ~~condescension~~ is really misplaced. Sometimes even harder to write for children - they're very perceptive, won't tolerate anything that's phony - they're very honest and open. Maybe that's why I enjoy being with them and writing for them.

*misconception - writing for children takes less effort & skill
never so keen - this best*