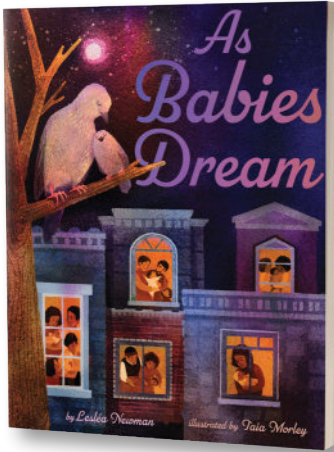




As Babies Dream: An Interview with the Author



As Babies Dream by Lesléa Newman is a sweet, rhyming lullaby. It's a calming ode to nature where a loving family embraces their child as night falls and dream time begins. From rivers to eagles, to lions and lambs, to leaves and rain, and to stars and the moon, the soothing sounds of the world become the inspiration for a loving night of restful sleep for a weary baby.

Magination Press interviewed Ms. Newman about her inspiration for the book and the process of creating it.

Magination Press: What inspired you to write *As Babies Dream*?

Lesléa Newman: The text was originally written as a poem to express my gratitude for the love my parents gave me from the very first moment that I was born.

MP: How did you choose the different animals and ecosystems you included?

LN: Since the book is a rhyming text, the animals were largely chosen by playing with language in order to get the words, and especially the sounds of the words, just right.

MP: Why focus on animals and natural phenomena until the very last page?

LN: I wanted to show that we human animals are part of the beautiful, diverse, natural world around us and all creatures are comforted by loving parents who create a safe harbor to give their offspring a place to dream.

MP: There are many bedtime books and books featuring adult and baby animals. Why did you want to create one?

LN: There can never be enough of them!

MP: What did you think when you first saw Taia Morley's illustrations?

LN: I was absolutely astonished and delighted at the way she so beautifully brought my text to life.

MP: Did you discuss which animals would be in illustrations that don't name the animals specifically with Ms. Morley?

LN: As is usual in the creation of picture books, I did not have any contact with the artist. She was free to interpret my text and use her considerable talent in any way she wished.

MP: Did you discuss the depiction of diverse families on the last page with Morley?

LN: I discussed this extensively with my editor, as representation of diversity is extremely important to me. And I am thrilled with this illustration.

MP: Why show families in an urban setting instead of in nature, like the animals?

LN: That was the choice of my editor and illustrator.

MP: Do you have a favorite lullaby or bedtime story? One that you remember from your childhood or from reading to children?

This Article's Author

Lesléa Newman is the author of 70 books for readers of all ages, including *A Letter to Harvey Milk*; *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*; *I Carry My Mother*; *The Boy Who Cried Fabulous*; *Ketzel, the Cat Who Composed*; *Heather Has Two Mommies*; *Sparkle Boy*; and *Gittel's Journey: An Ellis Island Story*. She has received many literary awards, including creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Artists Foundation, two American Library Association Stonewall Honors, the Massachusetts Book Award, the Association of Jewish Libraries Sydney Taylor Award, the Highlights for Children Fiction Writing Award, a Money for Women/Barbara Deming Memorial Fiction Writing grant, the James Baldwin Award for Cultural Achievement, the Cat Writer's Association Muse Medallion, and the Dog Writers Association of America's Maxwell Medallion. Nine of her books have been Lambda Literary Award Finalists. From 2005–2009, Lesléa was on the faculty of the Stonecoast MFA program at the University of Southern Maine. From 2008–2010, she served as the Poet Laureate of Northampton, MA. She has taught fiction writing at Clark University and currently she is a faculty mentor at Spalding University's brief residency MFA in Writing program. You can find Lesléa at the Lesléa Newman website or on Twitter @lesleanewman.