

Melissa Babcock Saylor  
Illustrator

I've always wanted to be an illustrator. But, in the late 70's when I was finishing up at art school in Ashland Oregon, it just seemed like it was a dream that was a bit too big for a girl from Albany Oregon.

Luckily, I've always been able to find work in the art field. I've worked in advertising, editorial news, designed greeting cards and even dabbled in licensing my designs for awhile.

But, I always wanted to illustrate for children. As an only child books were wonderful friends to me. Even before I could read. Those pictures could tell me a story.

Fast forward to 2008. This was a big year for me. I got cancer. I'm okay now, but there were surgeries and lots and lots of tests. You get the picture. Anyway, I had time to reflect on what I really wanted to do with my art. By 2013 I had put together what I thought was a pretty good illustration portfolio, with my watercolor illustrations. I had signed up to attend a workshop with the Highlights Foundations. During the workshop I was giving an assignment to complete in cut paper. I had so much fun creating and cutting and gluing. Anyway, the next day the instructors took me aside and told me, I need a portfolio done in cut paper. I had to start over. Well, that was a bit of a shock. But, that's exactly what I did.

Once the new portfolio was completed, I began sending out postcards to publishers. I did this a lot. And one day, I got an email from an editor at Kane Miller Books. They had something they wanted me to illustrate. The catch was, I didn't have much time to get it finished. I had one month. Somehow I managed to complete the project on time. That book was called **Also An Animal** written by Lynn Parrish Sutton. I have been fortunate enough to illustrate a second book for Kane Miller Books called **I Love You, Spacely** also written by Sutton. Later I illustrated a book called **In Search of a Beanstalk** by Bryon Cahill, published by Benchmark.

I continue to paint my paper and cut things up. Making a lovely mess all over my basement studio.

I still live in Albany with my husband Steve and our two corgi's, Hazel and Martin. We have two grown children who live nearby and two wonderful grandsons.