
AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT



Kathleen Doherty on *The Thingity-Jig*

ABOUT THE BOOK

Under the light of a silvery moon, Bear wanders into people town and discovers a springy thing, a bouncy thing—a sit-on-it, jump-on-it thing! This Thingity-Jig is too heavy to carry home by himself, so Bear runs back to the woods and asks for help. Too bad for Bear, his friends are sleepy and shoo him away. So Bear invents a Rolly-Rumpity to wheel the Thingity-Jig home, but then it all gets stuck in the mud! How will Bear tackle this bump in the road? With a Lifty-Uppity, of course!

Q: *Where did your inspiration for **The Thingity-Jig** come from?*

A: I saw a discarded couch in my neighborhood and remembered how I used to jump on one as a kid when my parents weren't looking. Then I played "What if?" What if an animal found the couch and wanted to keep it?

Q: *As a reading specialist with experience in elementary education, what aspects of wordplay and storytelling did you feel were important to include in this story?*

A: As a reading specialist, I'd model writing in the K–5 classrooms. I had never had a teacher demonstrate exactly *how* to write. So I'd think aloud as I wrote on an overhead and show how messy writing can get...how to use literary devices...and how to revise. Some of those same literary devices (onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, and personification) I included in *The Thingity-Jig* to make it more fun and entertaining.

Q: *When and how did you know you wanted to be a teacher?*

A: As a kid, I always loved my teachers and liked to play school. My best friend and I decided in 6th grade to become teachers...and we did!

Q: *How did you feel when you saw Kristyna Litten's interpretation of Bear's inventions?*

A: It was LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT! Kristyna's illustrations are engaging, whimsical, colorful...and tell half the story. I love sharing this book with her.

Q: *If you could invent a contraption to make any daily task easier, what would you make?*

A: Well, I love Italian food, but I don't like to cook. So I'd love to invent a whatchamacallit that could be programmed to make a classic Italian dish from start to finish...with just the push of a button!

Q: *How did you come up with the made-up words and inventions?*

A: I made up words that contained funny sounds. In the English language, these letters make funny sounds because they burst or explode off your lips: b, hard c, d, hard g, k, p, and t. That's why underpants is a funnier word than underwear because underpants has the explosive /p/ sound.

Q: *You have written quite a collection of children's poetry for **Highlights for Children** magazine. Did your*

background in poetry affect your writing for The Thingity-Jig?

A: Yes. Writing poetry instilled in me a love of rhythm and rhyme. A rhythmic story well-written has a pattern of beats in the sentences that can help make the story easy, natural, and fun to read over and over.

Q: What made you take the leap from published poetry and short stories in magazines to picture books?

A: I fell in love with picture books after taking a children’s literature class while working on an education degree. But I didn’t think I could write one; I thought all the good ideas were already taken. Then years later, as a reading specialist, I’d use picture books in grades K–5th as springboards for writing activities. That’s when I got serious about writing picture books.

Q: What do you like most about writing for children?

A: I love to write funny stories and ones with heart. I hope my books help turn reluctant readers into book lovers.

Q: Do you feel more creative and productive during the day or at night like Bear?

A: I do my best writing later in the day. Bear and I are soulmates!

Q: The Thingity-Jig is full of themes of ingenuity, problem-solving, determination, and even recycling. Why were these important lessons for you to share with young readers?

A: I think these are important qualities for kids to have so they’ll grow up to be good citizens and get the most out of life. I always told my students they could do hard things, and I’d offer “extra credit” challenges. I once had a third grader memorize the *Gettysburg Address*. How impressive is that?

Q: What do you hope readers will take away from The Thingity-Jig?

A: Never give up. Find a way to make it happen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathleen Doherty is a Reading Specialist and holds an Ed.S. Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She’s written standardized test items for Pearson Inc. and her love of learning has led her to graduate from four different universities. A former teacher of elementary school for over 30 years, Kathy’s work has appeared in numerous magazines. She lives in Indiana.