



A Note from Ruth Whiting, the Author-Illustrator of *Lonely Bird*

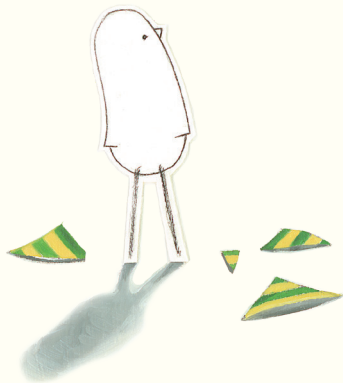
Lonely Bird began as a vague doodle on the back of a notebook. Of course, I doodle a lot, but this was different. Almost immediately, she hopped right off the paper and into my brain as a fully formed character. She and I spent some time getting to know each other. It quickly became apparent that she was an artist. Suddenly, every little unexplained and seemingly accidental pictograph that one might see in the plaster of an old house, or chipped paint, or crumpled paper had a mysterious creator. Lonely Bird works while we are not looking, adding tiny art to our mundane world.

Lonely Bird is a liminal being. She can move, with ease, between our 3D world and the world of images. Sometimes she might slip into an art book for some inspiration. While there, she assumes the style of the images it contains. Exploring the world through Lonely Bird's eyes has been quite an adventure. She has been my constant companion for many years. She offers another view of the world. One where even the smallest, most ordinary household item can become art.

Making and refining the first book of the Lonely Bird trilogy has taught me so much. Not only about the process of book creation, but also about Lonely Bird herself and the story she is really made to tell. It all comes back to navigating our world as a creative. My background is in fine art. I have made my living in the creative sphere for the last twenty years. Having the chance to craft books that show the trials and triumphs of creativity is immensely rewarding for me.

The process of making the paintings for the Lonely Bird books is quite laborious. Each scene must first be created in real life. Sometimes really elaborate cinematic methods must be used to get the photograph I need. Each final image is painted in oil on specially prepared paper and takes two to four weeks to complete. Painting and slowly building up the layers to create luminous images is deeply satisfying for me. These books are modern-day illuminated manuscripts.

There are many autobiographical facets of Lonely Bird, in both the character and the books. I am perpetually an outsider—an artist with ties to three continents. I sound foreign wherever I am. I often find myself as an observer. My comfort, and constant companion, is my own creative mind. Lonely Bird embodies the quiet joy of seeing the world a little differently and the drive to make art as a way of connecting with others.



My fondest wish is that a shy child might read this book and feel a kinship with Lonely Bird that helps them understand their own place in the world just a little better.

—Ruth