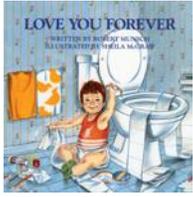
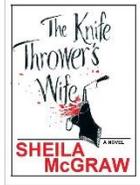


Update: I first interviewed Artist/illustrator/author Sheila McGraw in 2010. Since that time, she has gone through a divorce, changed residences a time or two, and has branched out into the world of fiction. She has received numerous accolades over the years as the illustrator of the classic children's book, "Love You Forever," authored by Robert Munsch, published in 1986.



Today over 30 million copies have been sold and is available in five languages. McGraw's portfolio also includes an impressive number of other children's books that she has illustrated and/or authored, and two works of fiction. Most recently, "The Knife Thrower's Wife"—an absolute page turner. I caught up with her recently to engage her in a little Q and A:

Q: When did you get interested in writing fiction and how is "Still Life with Cat and Mouse" different from "The Knife Thrower's Wife"?



A. Writing both murder and kid-lit might seem a bit oppositional, confusing even, I'm aware. Maybe too much of the lollipops and unicorns genre needs a good palate-cleansing mysterious murder. However, I've always been a big mystery reader, so it was natural to gravitate to the genre, although two mystery novels in ten years, plus one in the works, isn't exactly prolific. Both "Still Life with Cat and Mouse" and "The Knife Thrower's Wife" are in a subset of mysteries known as domestic-suspense, which generally involves murderous members of households and the manipulations, gaslighting, irritations, abuse, and other nasty behavior central to sharing both space and a gene-pool with others. Unfortunately, "Still Life with Cat and Mouse" is out of print although I'm considering a rewrite.

Q: Do you fashion your characters based on people you've known?

A. While there may be an element of someone I've known in a character, each character may be a hybrid of multiple people with a healthy dose of imagined characteristics added. Each character has their own construct of a world they inhabit which influences their actions, reactions, and general thought processes. While a police officer and a run of the mill gun-nut may both collect weapons, I would portray their attitudes toward the firearms very differently. If a woman and her friend are both artists, they will see the world differently if one paints like Michelangelo and the other paints like Jackson Pollock.

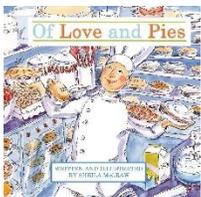
Q. Which takes the most time: Illustrating children's books or outlining a cast of conniving fictional characters?

A. My nickname when I worked as a commercial illustrator was "Quickdraw McGraw". I was speedy and never missed a deadline. While there are writers who crank out a novel in a few months, that's not me. On that basis, I have to go with illustrating as faster, although comparing the two polar-opposite disciplines is pretty difficult.

Q: You have recently branded LOVE YOU FOREVER® and now have products that are aligned with the book. How is that going?

A. I finally have the LOVE YOU FOREVER® trademarks registered in both the US and Canada and have been working on establishing an ecommerce setup. It's an exciting time, but still too early to promote the line.

Q: What are you working on now and can you give us a bit of what we can expect?



OF LOVE AND PIES will be released on June 1st. It's a quirky, humorous, nonsense-rhyming book. The reviews have been very positive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6op760hdRSI>