



The Letterpress Project

An Interview with Rumin Wu

Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?

I've always been drawn to fiction, especially horror. Stephen King has been my favourite author for a long time. His books are often quite long, but I really enjoy getting lost in them. *The Dark Tower* is probably the one that stayed with me the most. I'm really interested in stories that go beyond reality—they feel imaginative, but at the same time, they reveal something true about life and human nature.

When I was younger, reading wasn't just about the story itself, but also about the atmosphere it created. I liked how books could build a whole world in your mind, especially in horror, where tension and emotion play such a big role. That really shaped how I think about storytelling now.

For picture books, Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* really inspired me. It makes you feel like anything can happen. What I find especially inspiring is how he uses visual metaphors to express complex ideas and emotions. The illustrations are so detailed and immersive—they create these large, almost cinematic scenes that make you feel like anything is possible. That really influenced the way I think about combining imagery and storytelling in my own work.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?

A big influence on me was Jimmy Liao, a well-known illustrator and picture book creator in Taiwan. His work had a strong emotional impact on me, and he became a role model when I was in junior high.

At that time, I really enjoyed making handmade cards for people I cared about. I would draw in a style inspired by his illustrations and combine it with a few words to express my feelings. It was a very simple and personal way of communicating, but it meant a lot to me.

People responded positively to my drawings, which encouraged me to keep going. Gradually, my work developed from small, intimate cards into larger and more detailed illustrations. Over time, I became more interested in building scenes and creating narratives, and that naturally led me into storytelling.

Looking back, I think my journey started from a very genuine place—just wanting to share emotions with others—and it slowly grew into a deeper passion for illustration and creating stories.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?

For me, a successful book or illustration is one that creates a real emotional connection with the reader. It's about sharing a feeling that they can relate to, so they don't just see the work but actually experience it.

I'm really interested in that moment when a reader sees part of themselves in the work. It might remind them of a memory or bring up an emotion they hadn't fully recognised before. That kind of resonance feels very powerful.

I also think a good piece doesn't give everything away straight away. It leaves a bit of space for the reader to interpret and bring their own experiences into it. In that sense, the meaning isn't fixed—it grows differently for each person.

Ideally, it feels like a kind of shared journey. Success is when a book or illustration becomes more than just something to look at or read—it becomes a shared emotional experience, where both the creator and the reader can reflect, connect, and maybe even grow a little.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?

I don't usually have a specific audience in mind, and that's actually part of what I find most interesting. I'm really curious about what people take away from my illustrations or stories and how they interpret them in their own way. When I'm creating, I sometimes imagine the audience's reactions—their expressions, or how they might feel—but I don't try to control it too much. I like leaving space for different perspectives.

For me, that sense of curiosity is one of the most exciting parts of the process. It keeps the work open and allows each viewer or reader to have their own unique experience.

Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?

In my opinion, physical books will continue to play a very important role, especially in terms of creative expression. I don't think they'll be replaced completely by e-books, particularly when it comes to children's picture books. For example, I think parents tend to be more careful when choosing what kind of media their children engage with, and physical books often feel more intentional and meaningful in that context.

Maybe I'm a bit optimistic, but I still believe physical books offer something unique. The tactile experience—the feeling of holding a book, turning the pages—creates a different kind of memory. It has a certain emotional weight and presence that digital formats can't fully replace.

Because of that, I think physical books will continue to have a strong place in how we experience stories and remember them.

Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?

I wouldn't say I'm a serious collector, but I am definitely a book lover. I really enjoy looking at books as physical objects—not just the story, but also the cover design, the illustrations, the binding, and the print quality. I like seeing how everything comes together as a complete piece.

One book I really admire is *Romance* by Blexbolex. I love how it uses a very limited colour palette, but still feels full of meaning and subtle hints. There's something very thoughtful about the way it's designed—it feels simple at first, but very rich when you spend time with it.

It's definitely one of those books I'd love to own, because it represents the kind of balance between image, design, and storytelling that I really appreciate.



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