

# THE ARTS OF PLAY

Michigan Artists and Authors Speak Out

By Jessica Snyder and Dr. Elizabeth Goodenough

# Where are we going?

- Play is crucial for a child's development
  - Creativity, emotions, sense of self
  - Play theorists, children's literature, play workers
- Looking at artists' childhood play spaces
  - Spaces are critical to childhood development
- Artists:
  - Tracy Gallup
  - Merrie Haskell
  - Zibby Oneal
  - David Small



# How did we get there?

- These authors were selected because they are natives to Michigan.
  - Contacted via acquaintances of Dr. Goodenough
- Interviewed through e-mail or by attending presentations by the authors
- Information is being used to set the groundwork for a documentary which may be used to advocate for arts funding in public schools.
  - Companion to “Where Do the Children Play?” (2008)



# Tracy Gallup

- Born in Ann Arbor, MI
- Dollmaker, author and illustrator
- *A Roomful of Questions* (2008)
- “My dolls have a calm, contemplative expression, comforting to me... like looking into a world I create.”



# Tracy Gallup

- “Having a depressed mother was very difficult... but I did find peace with my dolls.”



# Tracy Gallup

- “We had lots of time in empty lots near our home.”
- “I remember playing with our dolls under bushes that created a tent like space.”



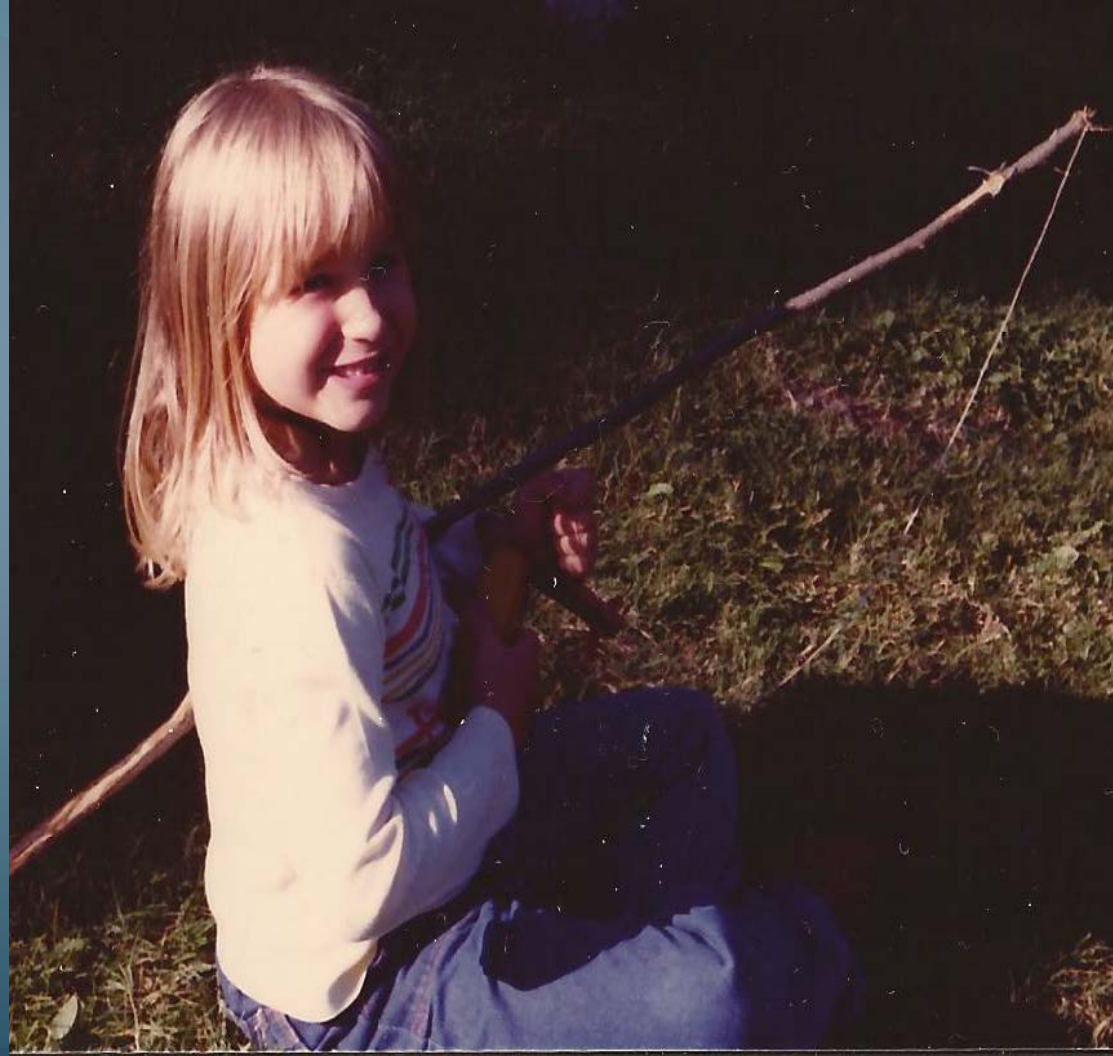
# Merrie Haskell

- Born in Sault Ste. Marie , MI
- *The Princess Curse* (2011)
- “An only child, I played pretend by myself, acting out parts of books I’d read.”



# Merrie Haskell

- “I returned to Michigan for summers to honor my parents’ custody arrangement.”
- “I was supposed to blend back and forth.”
- “I latched onto writing and the gift of being an observer.”





# Merrie Haskell

- “My grandfather was a storyteller.”
- “Our special bonding: to sit on his lap before bed every night and get a story.”



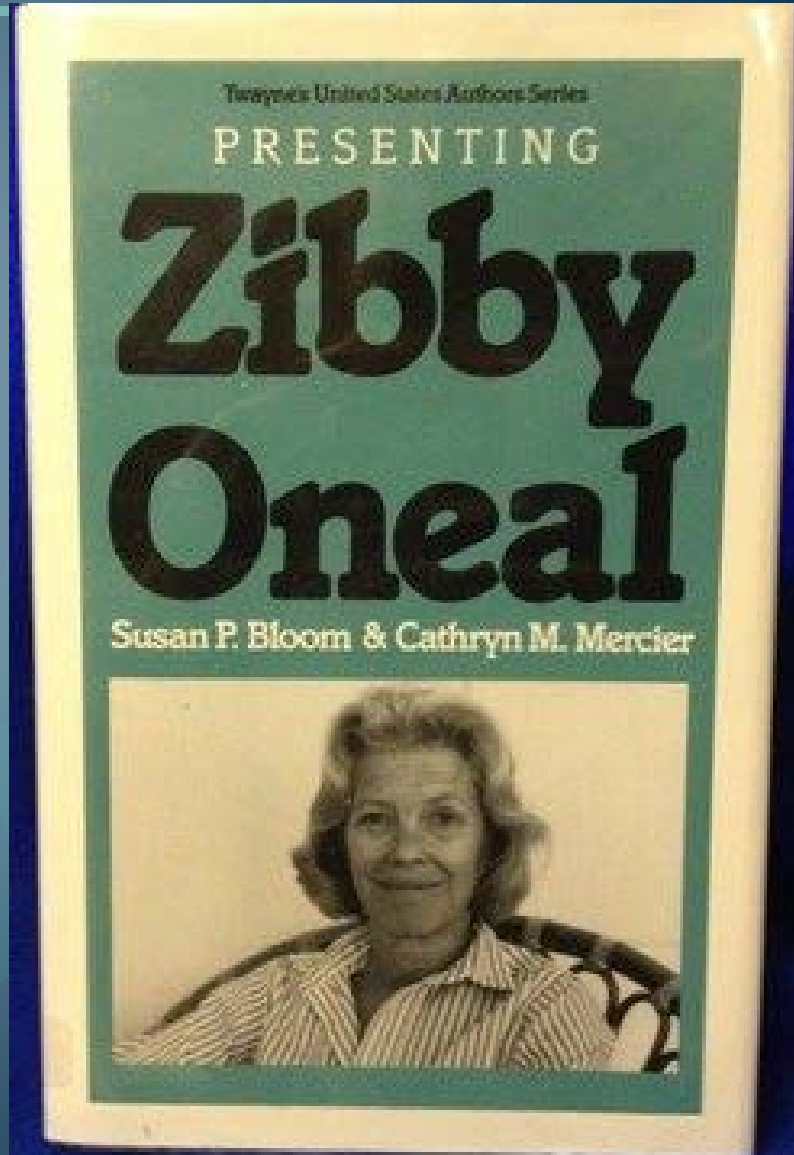
# Merrie Haskell

- “My mother took me to the library; she let me spend my money on a typewriter.”
- “She left me alone when I said I was going to go write.”
- “I boiled marigolds and rubbed the juice in my eyes to see fairies...”



# Zibby Oneal

- Born Omaha, Nebraska
- *The Language of Goldfish* (1990)
  - “Destined to become a classic” –Robert Cormier
- “My mother read to me every night at bedtime.”



# Zibby Oneal

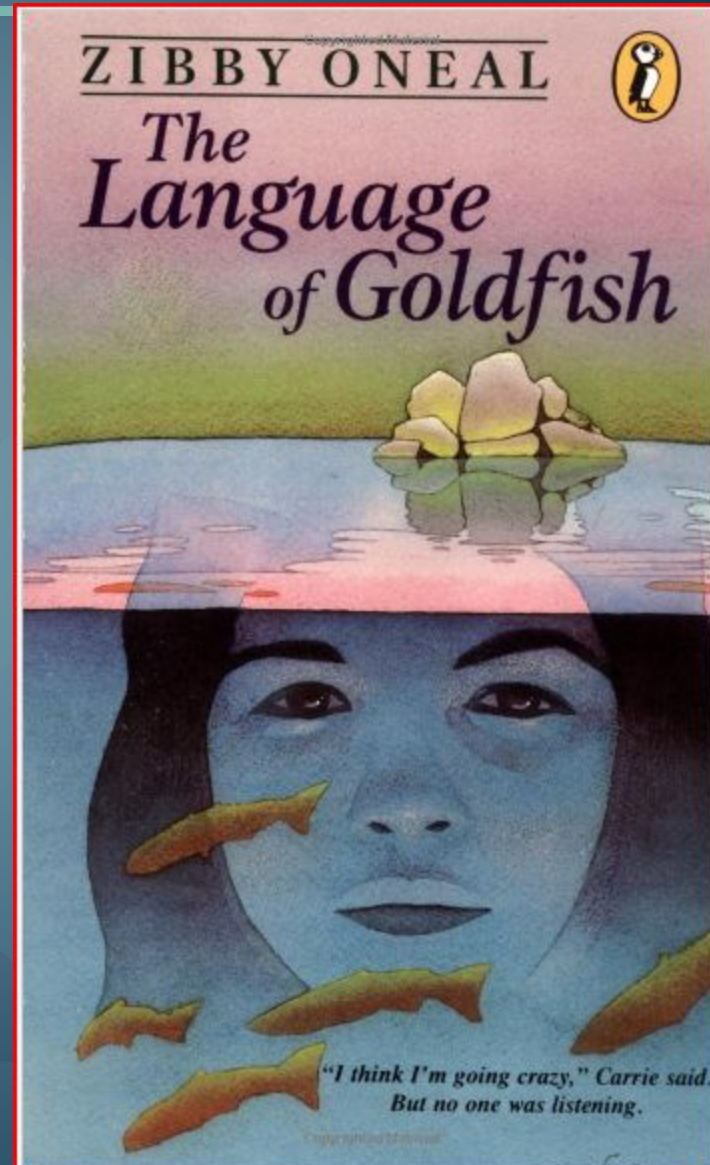
- “A lilac bush in our backyard: I could crouch beneath its branches, screened by leaves, and think my thoughts.”
- “I realized the *appearance* of reading mattered.”
- “So long as I held an open book, eyes on the page, I could count on being left to myself.”



# Zibby Oneal

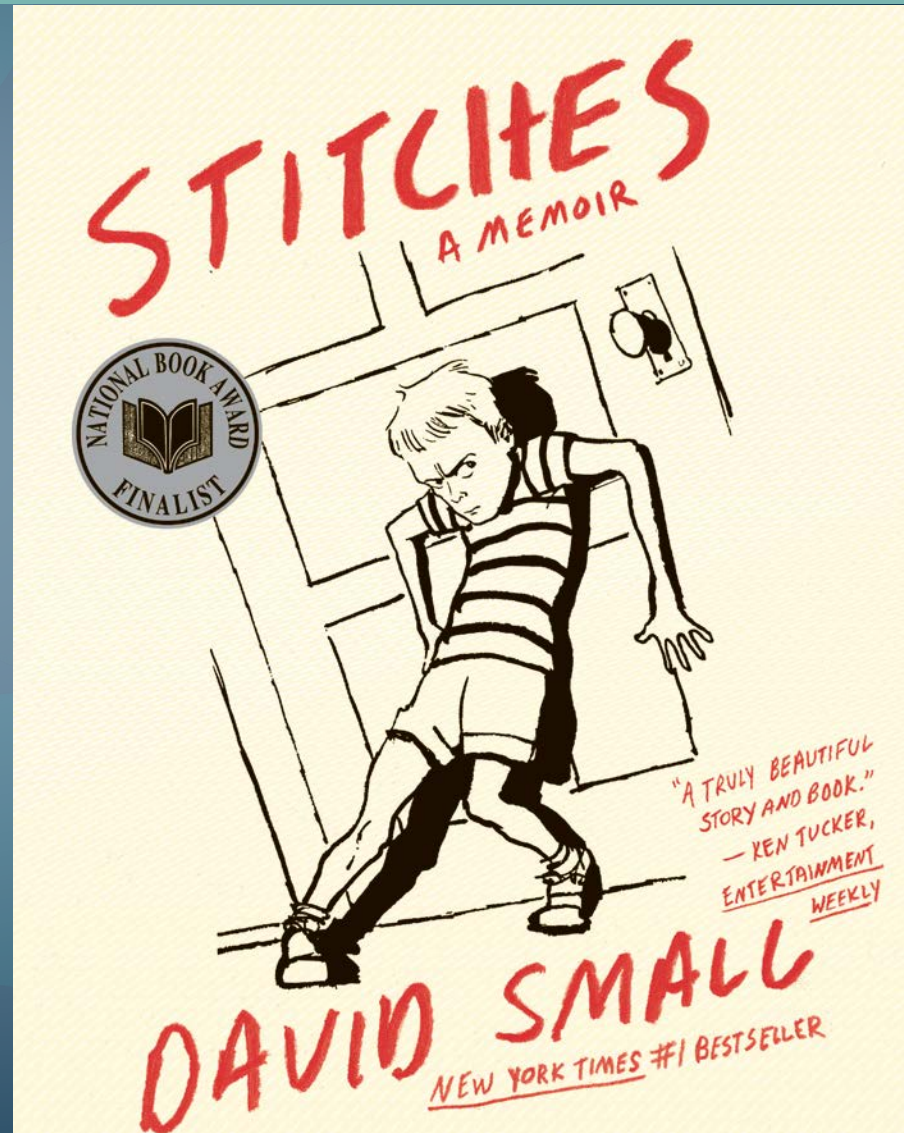
- “We had a fishpond in our backyard, a fantasy world to me. All summer I had a drama going on out there.”
- “She walked slowly around to the back of the house, where June bugs were whirring in the lilac bushes beyond the fish pond.”

*The Language of Goldfish* (164)



# David Small

- Born in Flint, MI
- Wrote *Stitches* (2011) as “diagnosis and self-therapy”
- To explore whether “writing changed how you felt about things”



# David Small

- Drawing made dream worlds, fanciful and whimsical
- Sometimes his cartoons grew violent



# David Small

- Rather than becoming a savage political cartoonist, Small chose illustrating for children
- This career gave him “purity and restraint”
- A happy place “richer by keeping things under the surface”

