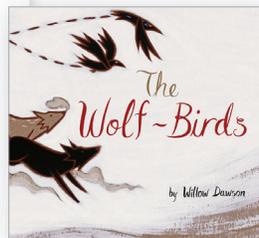


## Meet author/illustrator Willow Dawson

**WILLOW DAWSON** is an author, illustrator, and cartoonist. She has illustrated several picture books and graphic novels and teaches Creating Comics and Graphic Novels at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. She also teaches sequential art and scriptwriting to youth across her home city of Toronto, Ontario. Visit her blog <http://willowdawson.blogspot.ca> and find her on Twitter as @WillowDawson.



978-1-77147-054-4  
\$18.95 CDN / \$17.95 US

In a story set deep in the wild winter wood, food is scarce for ravens and wolves — but if they team up, they just *might* be able to help each other. Based on scientific data and anecdotal reports from Aboriginal hunters, *The Wolf-Birds* explores the fascinating symbiotic relationship between wolves and ravens.

### When you were a kid, what was your favorite thing to do?

I used to love spending the day at the beach playing in the sandy tide pools. We also had a cabin deep in the woods in the mountains of British Columbia, and I loved just sitting under the trees, listening to all the sounds around me.

### What did you most dislike doing when you were a child?

Reading. And math. I struggled with concentration and memory as a child and I never really did very well in school as a result. I loved looking at the pictures in books, especially fairy tales, and I would spend great amounts of time making up my own stories based on the comics I had.

### As a child, where did you dream of living?

In the woods. I remember reading *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves* both by Jean Craighead George and taking copious notes on how to do everything. I dreamed a lot of running away from home and living in a hollowed-out tree with a wolf. Of course, in reality I knew this would be impossible, mainly because I had such severe asthma and my allergies to animals like dogs and cats and birds and bee stings didn't just make me sneezy, they would land me in the hospital.

### What did you think you were good at when you were a kid?

I always knew I was good at drawing and I liked climbing things a lot, too. I liked being really high up and looking out over things.

### When you were a kid in school, what did you look for in a friend?

I really struggled to make friends in school and so I was mostly a solitary child. I was sick a lot, and when I was

# The Petit Proust Questionnaire

from Owlkids Books

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at school I couldn't really run around and play tag or kiss-the-boys (a version of tag where you had to kiss a boy rather than tagging him) with the other kids. I couldn't go to most birthday parties, either, because people had pets. So I missed out on a lot of the opportunities that kids have to form good, strong friendships. It was hard but as I grew up I found that art became a bridge, not only to other worlds, but also to people and friends.

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

A pilot and an artist. My father is both, and growing up, he was a huge inspiration to me. He taught me all about drawing and painting and sculpture and woodworking, and one of the things he instilled in me is a love of flight. In fact, he just finished building an airplane! He didn't use a kit as most people do — he built the entire thing from scratch. It's a 1920s Pietenpol Air Camper and it's beautiful.

## What was your favorite book as a child?

*My Side of the Mountain*. But secondary to that, my father used to take me to the old second-hand book stores. I think it was his way of trying to encourage me to read more, and one day I found a dusty old book deep in a bin somewhere at the back of the store. It was about Amelia Earhart, and it was the most inspiring thing to read about her life and final flight. My grandmother saw the book on my bed and told me how she and her girlfriends used to hover at the newsstand every day to read about the next leg of Amelia's adventure. She said they were all so devastated when Amelia was declared missing. It was really wonderful to bond with my grandmother over her story.

## What is your favorite pastime now?

I still love spending time in the woods. And I miss the ocean, dreadfully. Any time I'm in a coastal town I have to spend at least one day walking the shoreline.

## What do you find an absolute chore?

Cooking. I will fold laundry and do dishes over cooking any day!

## If you could live anywhere, where would you go?

Somewhere coastal and full of trees. California seems like a nice place...

## What is the one talent you wish you had?

Flying on a trapeze. Or riding a unicycle, walking on stilts... I always thought running away with the circus might be fun, too.

## What makes a good friend?

Someone you have fun with, you can learn from and who likes to learn things from you.

## If you weren't an author or illustrator, what job would you have?

I probably would have been a figure skater, but I broke my kneecap and began concentrating more on drawing and writing.



# The Petit Proust Questionnaire

from Owlkids Books



## What children's books have caught your attention lately?

*Wild* by Emily Hughes is everything I wanted to be as a child. I have a little boy now, and we're just starting to get into picture books, which is the best. We love anything by Oliver Jeffers — he's brilliant! *Over and Under the Snow* and *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner and Christopher Silas Neal are favourites, too. I absolutely adore *This Is Sadie* by Sara O'Leary and Julie Morstad and *Home* by Carson Ellis. And anything by Isabelle Arsenault.

## If you had to have a motto, what would it be?

Do what makes you happy, and do it a bit better every day.

