

Bonnie Kelso

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Biography:

Bonnie Kelso is an award-winning picture book author and illustrator from Las Vegas, Nevada. With a background as an exhibit designer for organizations such as Smithsonian Institution, National Geographic, and NASA, Bonnie enjoys taking complex information and distilling it into bite-sized pieces. Her passion for nature and environmental awareness shines through in her books, murals, and community art workshops. She is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and has seven published picture books. Her picture book, *Dexter the Stand Up Dog*, received a California Reading Association Eureka! Silver Honor for nonfiction. Visit her website at www.BonnieKelso.com.

Published Books:

- *Dexter: The Stand Up Dog*, author and illustrator. Gnome Road Publishing, ©2025.
- *Nudi Gill: Poison Powerhouse of the Sea*, author and illustrator. Gnome Road Publishing, ©2023.
- Childhood Milestones Series: *Sea Smiles*, *Sleepy Sea*, and *Sea Suds*, author and illustrator. Gnome Road Publishing, ©2024, ©2025, and ©2026..
- *Wonder of the Woods*, author and illustrator. Little Press / One Little Earth, 2024.
- *Quail Trail*, author and illustrator. Muddy Boots, ©2024.
- *Goat Maa-th: An Addition Story*, illustrator. Written by Kari Ann Gonzalez. Gnome Road Publishing, ©2026.
- *In A Cave*, illustrator. Written by Heather Ferranti Kinser. Gnome Road Publishing, ©2023.
- *Anyone Else Awake?*, illustrator. Written by Carmela LaVigna Coyle. Muddy Boots, ©2026.
- *Your Nevada: A Young Reader's Collection of Stories and Poems about Nevada*, editor and contributing author/illustrator. Anthology, Independently Published, ©2026.
- *Gnomes and UnGnomes: Poems of Hidden Creatures*, contributing illustrator. An anthology published by The Writers Loft Press, ©2023.
- *Quinn's Closet Monsters*, contributor and cover illustration. An anthology published by Make-A-Wish Foundation, ©2021.

Awards and Honors:

- 2021 Winner of the SCBWI Karen Cushman Award for chapter book work in progress.
- 2023 Library of Congress Center for the Book Award, *Nudi Gill: Poison Powerhouse of the Sea*.
- 2025 California Reading Association: Eureka Silver Honor Award Winner for Nonfiction: *Dexter, the Stand Up Dog*.

Interviews:

April Berry Books, June 22, 2026. [Sea Suds – A Picture Book Postcard](#).

Lisa, The Pet Blog Lady, November 17, 2025. [Beloved Pet Influencer @DexterDogOuray Inspires in New Picture Book Celebrating Resilience and Determination](#).

Matt Sutherland, Foreword Magazine, September 4, 2025. [Having a PAWS-itive Mindset! A Conversation with the Creators of Dexter: The Stand Up Dog](#).

Emanuel Rose, Nature Bound Podcast, August 26, 2024. [The Art of Bringing Nature to Life: A Deep Dive with Bonnie Kelso](#).

John Robert Hatherly, Infinite Search Podcast, June 4, 2024. [Bonnie Kelso: Finding a Friend in Deep Waters](#).

Jed Doherty, Reading With Your Kids Podcast, May 30, 2024. [Dystopian Adventures & Fish With Weird Teeth](#).

Jamie Buttigieg, Parenting In The Digital Age Podcast, May 28, 2024. [Fostering Curiosity and Creativity in Children with Bonnie Kelso](#).

Teaching Books for Schools, TeachingBooks.net, July 2023. [Meet-the-Author Recording with Bonnie Kelso](#).

Ryan G. Van Cleave, Only Picture Books, March 13, 2023. [Author/Illustrator Interview: Bonnie Kelso](#).

Amanda Davis, "Rising Stars" series, February 22, 2021. [Meet Rising Star, Author-Illustrator Bonnie Kelso!](#)

Contributions:

Bonnie Kelso, Knowledge Quest Vol. 54 by AASL (American Association of School Librarians), CBC Column, November 3, 2025. [*Be the Big Fish: Building Readership Through Local Events.*](#)

Bonnie Kelso, LitLinks with Patricia Newman, August 13, 2025. [*How to Decode the Mysteries of Sleep with Sea Animals.*](#)

Bonnie Kelso, March On With Mentor Texts (MOWMT), March 8, 2025. [*MOWMT: Bonnie Kelso - Fun Hybrid Formats.*](#)

Ryan G. Van Cleave and Bonnie Kelso, Only Picture Books, February 3, 2025. [*Picture Book Review: Ramon Fellini the Dog Detective, by Guilherme Karsten.*](#)

Historical Novel Society Book Reviews, 2024 - Present. [*Various Picture Book, Middle Grade and Young Adult titles.*](#)

Ryan G. Van Cleave and Bonnie Kelso, Only Picture Books, April 1, 2024. [*Picture Book Review: A Party for Florine by Yevgenia Nayberg.*](#)

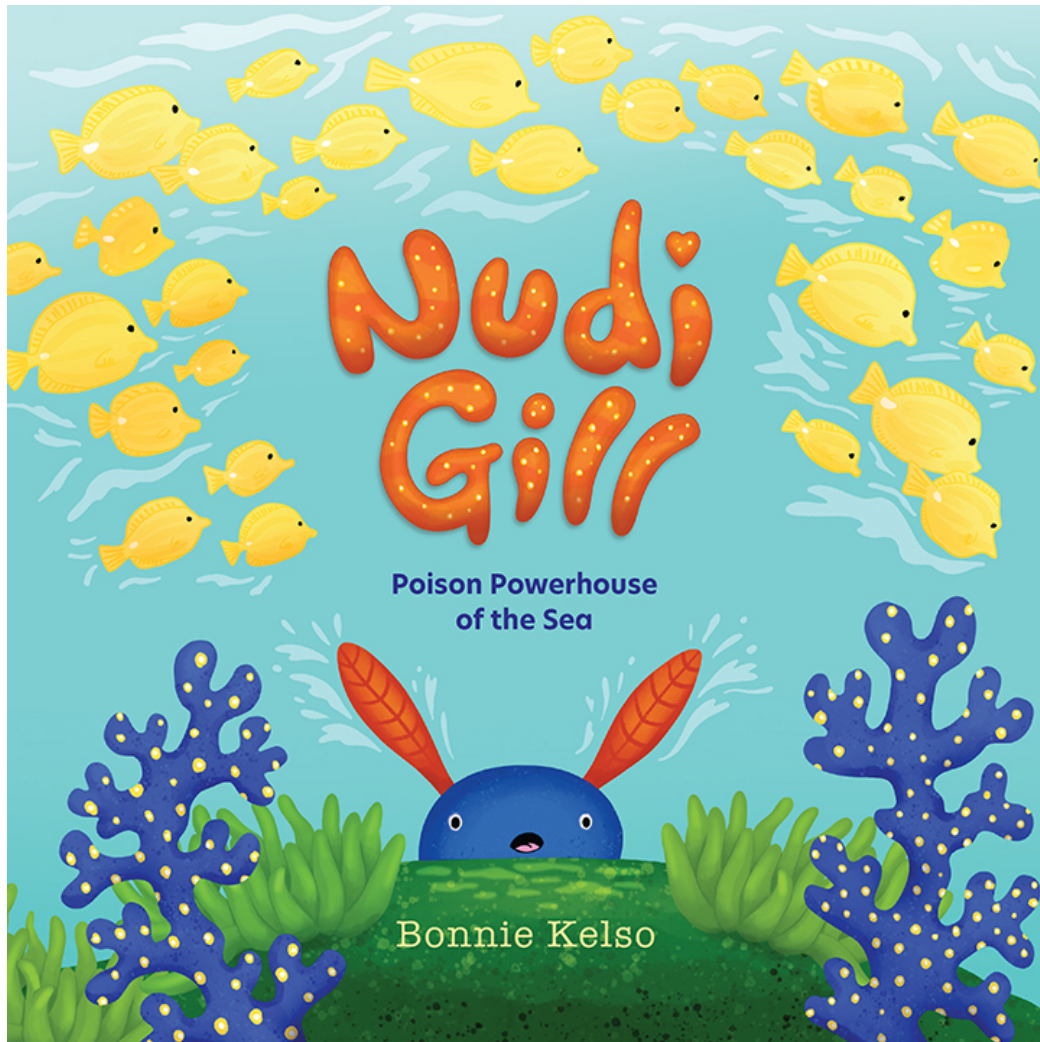
Bonnie Kelso, March On With Mentor Texts (MOWMT), March 11, 2024. [*MOWMT Day #11: Bonnie Kelso Makes More Merry – The More the Merrier: Managing Many Characters.*](#)

Bonnie Kelso, March On With Mentor Texts (MOWMT), March 12, 2023. [*MOWMT Day #12: Bonnie Kelso Finds the Funny – Cultivating Humor in Your Informational Fiction Picture Book Manuscript.*](#)

Ryan G. Van Cleave and Bonnie Kelso, Only Picture Books, July 4, 2022. [*Picture Book Review: Life In Hot Water by Mary Batten.*](#)

Ryan G. Van Cleave and Bonnie Kelso, Only Picture Books. November 2, 2020. [*Picture Book Review: Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice by Nikki Grimes.*](#)

Picture Book Cover Art and Descriptions:



Nudi Gill: Poison Powerhouse of the Sea *(April 4, 2023)*

Meet Gill, a flashy nudibranch (noo-de-brank) living a fierce and fascinating life in the ocean without a shell and completely . . . NAKED!

When a curious young snorkeler stumbles upon Gill, she learns there is more than meets the eye when it comes to her sassy new friend. This soft-bodied mollusk is anything but vulnerable, turning a diet of dangerous ocean creatures into a poisonous sting of its own. Found in unique shapes and colors in every ocean throughout the world, Gill and his diverse family of nudibranchs serve as a reminder that being small doesn't mean you can't have it all!

With illustrations as striking and colorful as Gill himself, this is an underwater adventure like no other where young readers can see for themselves what makes Gill and his fabulous family of nudibranchs tiny, but mighty poison powerhouses of the sea.



Sea Smiles (February 13, 2024)

When an otherwise harmless apple becomes the instrument for losing a tooth, a young girl is ready to retire her smile. That is . . . until she discovers teeth can give us all a lot to smile about.

This humorous, informative story is sure to be a hit with any kid who has lost a tooth, is about to, or just loves learning cool and fascinating facts about animals with weird teeth in the sea! Take a look inside the mouth of a Wolffish, penguin, sea krait and more. Then count up those teeth, and prepare to be surprised. One of these smiley sea animals has over 750,000 “teeth” - and it won't be the one you're expecting! Author-illustrator Bonnie Kelso brings blasts of color, texture and fun to an adorable cast of characters who make the business of losing teeth entertaining, and yet a normal part of life. It's a perfect addition to any library, home, or dental office waiting room.

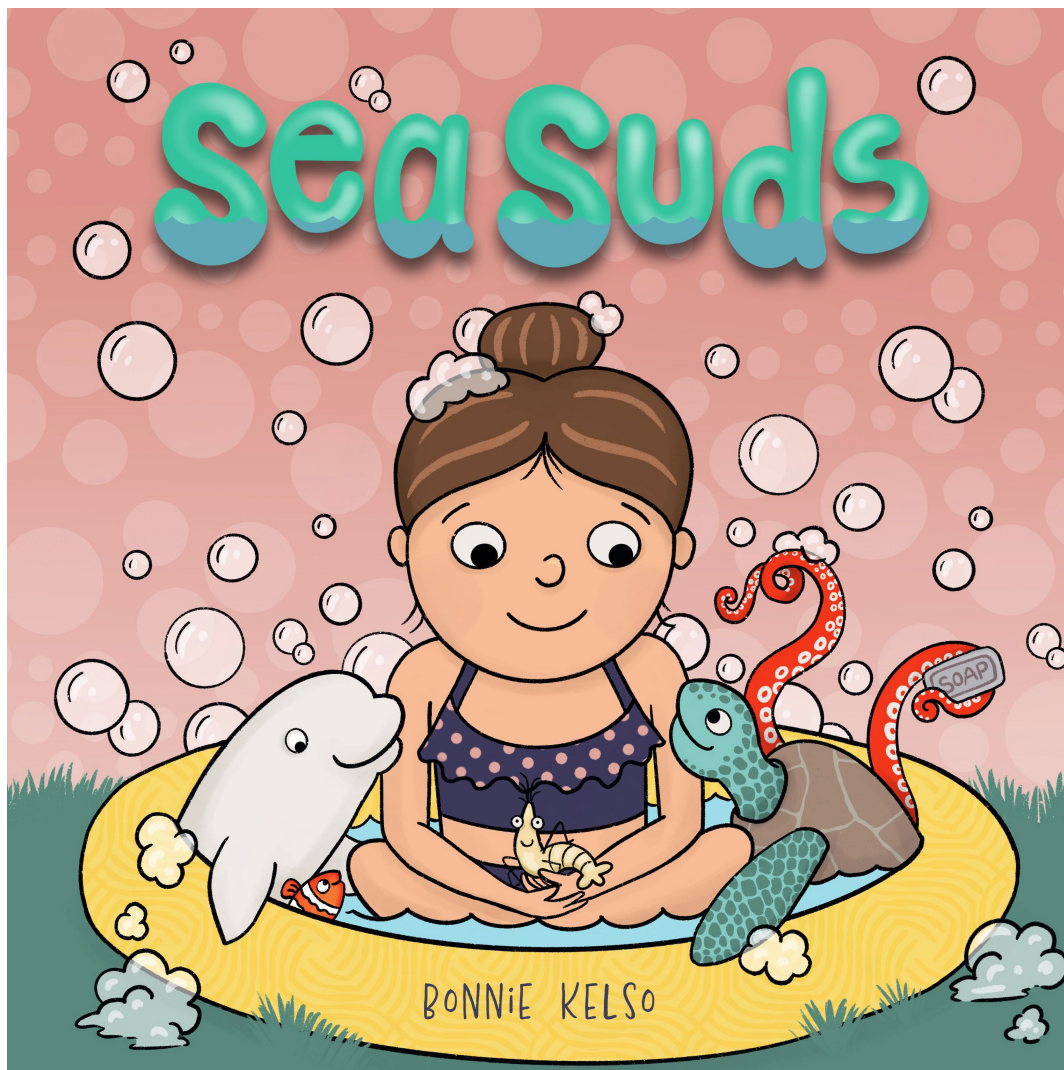


Sleepy Sea (March 18, 2025)

Put bedtime blues at bay by diving into this fact-filled exploration of ocean animal sleep habits with a young girl learning to get a good night's sleep of her own.

It's dark outside, but one little girl can't fall asleep in her new bed. With the help of an unexpected friend, she discovers the weird and wonderful ways sea creatures sleep, and finally catches a little shut eye herself. From sleeping with one eye open, upside down, or in a self-made "booger bubble", readers will find plenty of fascinating facts about sleep habits on almost every page. This informational fiction story is a playful introduction to navigating a major childhood milestone that also reassures readers that no matter how you feel, you are never truly alone.

Filled with charming illustrations, humor, and an adorable cast of characters, this book is sure to become a bedtime, and daytime favorite as well as a go-to for teachers and caregivers.

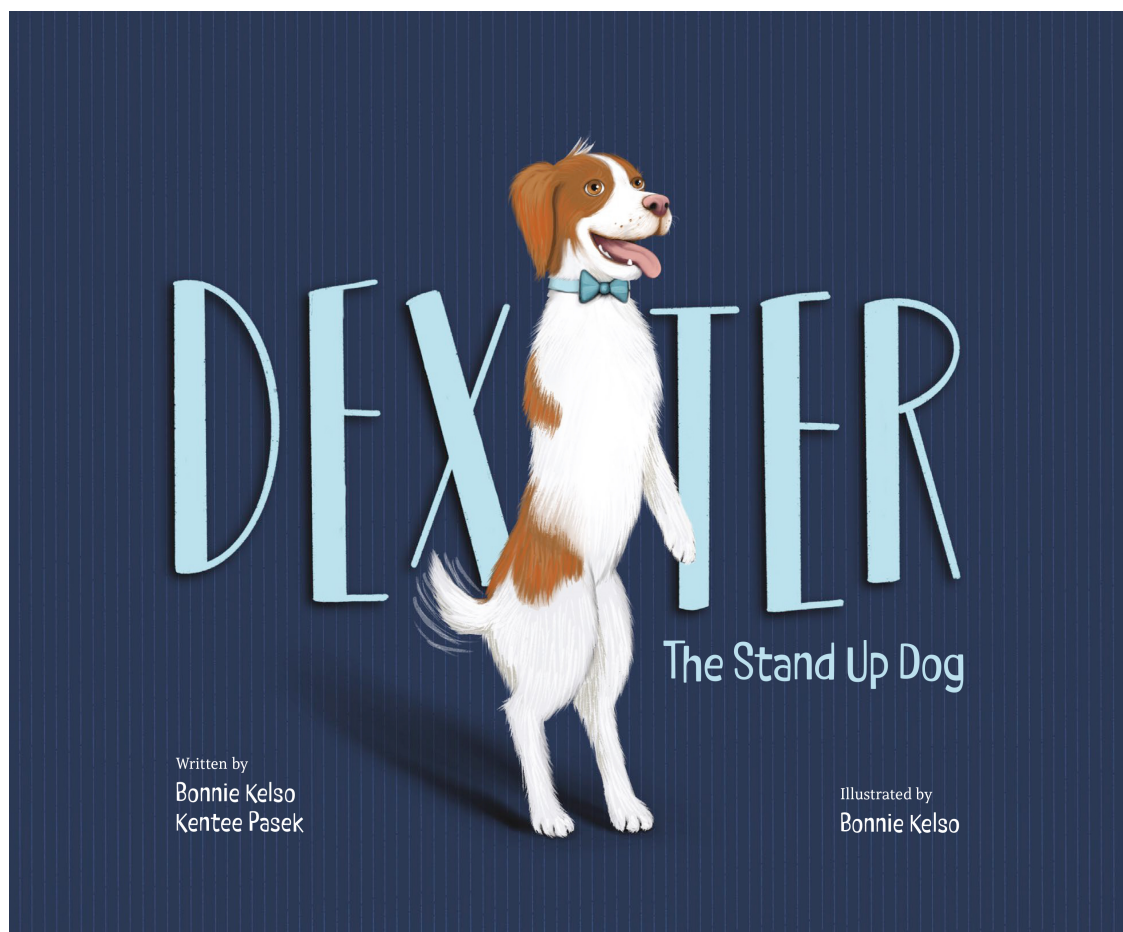


Sea Suds (April 21, 2026)

Banish bathtime boredom by diving into this fact-filled exploration of the ways that ocean animals take baths underwater.

It may be time to take a bath, but one little girl would rather dress up as a mermaid. Still, with the help of a few underwater friends, she discovers the strange and sudsy ways that sea creatures keep themselves clean. From rubbing themselves on anemones and pebbles to visiting a designated “cleaning station” where other animals clean off dead skin, readers will marvel at the myriad ways that sea creatures bathe. This informational fiction story is a playful introduction to navigating a major childhood milestone that also underscores the importance of maintaining cleaning habits.

Filled with charming illustrations, humor, and an adorable cast of characters, this book is sure to become a bathtime, bedtime, and daytime favorite as well as a go-to for teachers and caregivers.



Dexter: The Stand Up Dog *(September 16, 2025)*

Dexter was a happy Brittany Spaniel rescue puppy - running, playing with his ball, begging for belly rubs - until one day he ran out the door and over the fence into the road. Injured in a terrible accident, Dexter lost one front leg and the use of the other, but survived the ordeal through the skill of his veterinary team and love of his family. When Dexter finally came home, it was hard to run and jump again. His family bought him a wheelchair, but Dexter wanted to go faster. He made up his mind to do the impossible. And so one day . . . he did!

Dexter learned to walk, hop and run on two legs, and was embraced by the small Colorado community he called home. Then, during the difficult times of the COVID lockdowns, Dexter's story traveled across the Internet. His ability to stand tall inspired and encouraged thousands of people around the world, proving that any challenge could be overcome one "Dexter-step at a time."

This inspirational picture book is sure to be a hit with pet-lovers throughout the world and with anyone who embraces the power of love, hope and determination. It's perfect for storytime, classrooms, gift shops, home libraries, veterinary clinic waiting rooms, and anywhere dogs are adored. A California Reading Association 2025 EUREKA! Nonfiction Silver Award Winner.



Wonder of the Woods (September 17, 2024)

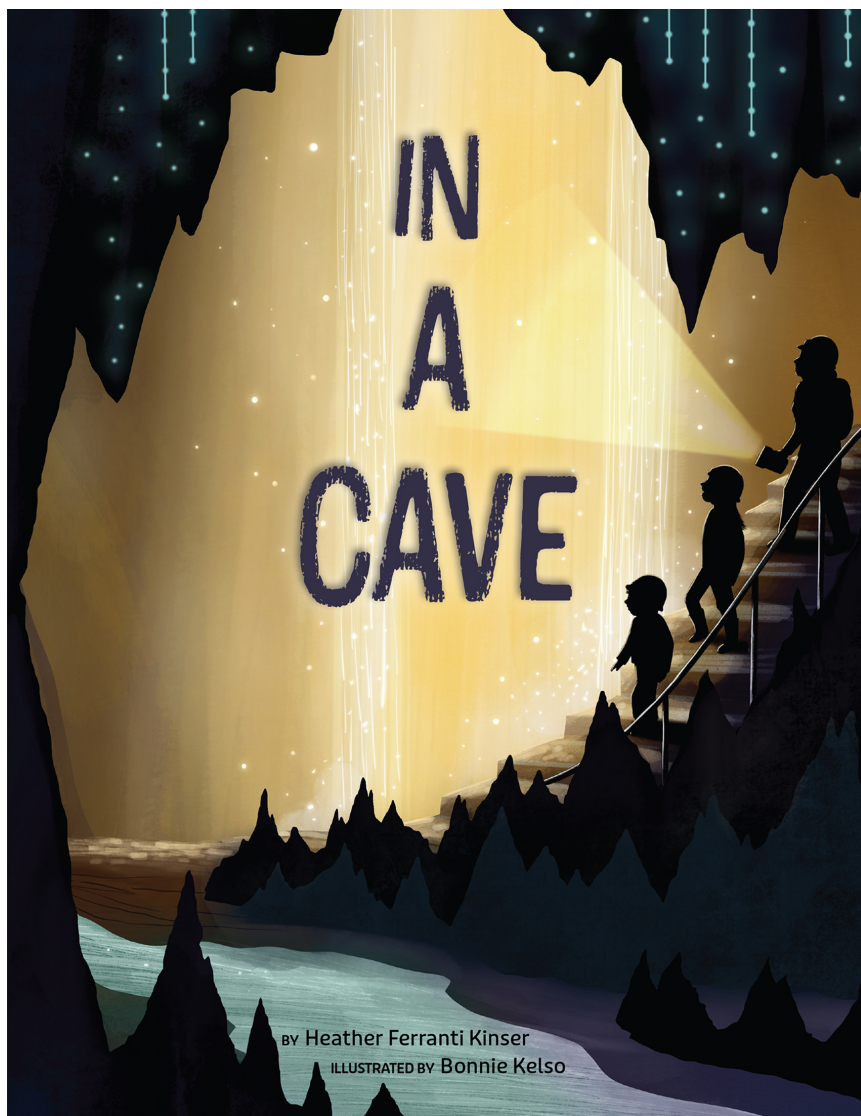
A young girl explores the wooded area near her home and encounters a variety of animals that are curious about their new visitor. Tails twitch, bodies ripple, and leaves drift. They watch each other from a safe distance. Could the Wonder of the Woods be YOU?

Wonders abound as you explore nature in this lyrical picture book about curiosity and harmony, by author-illustrator Bonnie Kelso.



Quail Trail (November 5, 2024)

Roxie is an independent-thinking quail chick who just has to find out what's over that hill! Topknot is her bossy troop leader who pecks the fun out of adventures with all her silly rules. When Roxie takes her own path, gets lost along the quail trail and can't remember the special call that will reunite her with her brood, she learns the hard way that a little listening can go a long way. *Quail Trail* is a funny, informational fiction picture book that will engage even the most reluctant reader. Parents and teachers will appreciate the gentle messaging regarding the importance of listening, self-awareness, and making good choices.

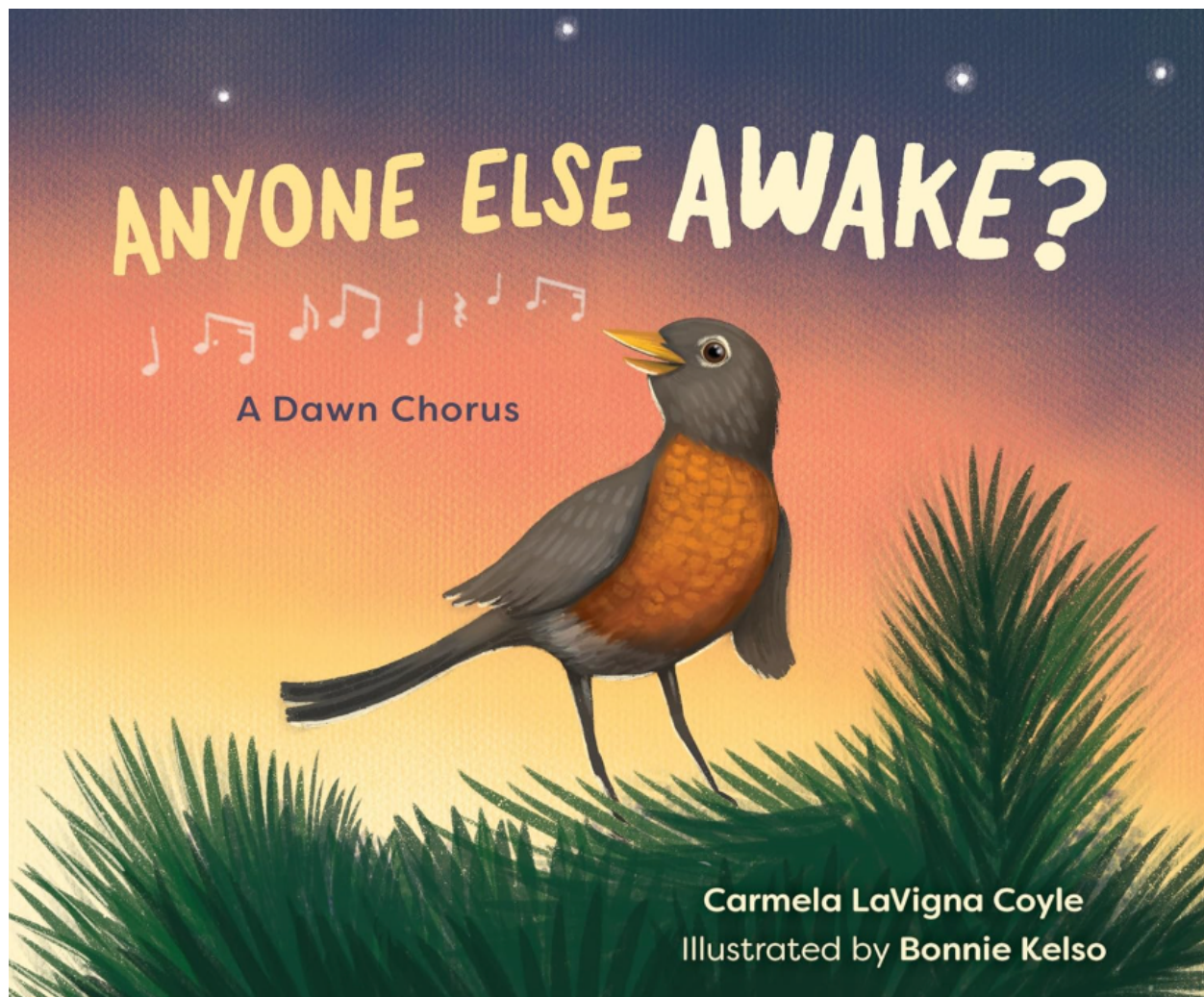


In A Cave (October 3, 2023)

Written by Heather Ferranti Kinser and illustrated by Bonnie Kelso.

Work up an appetite for cave popcorn as you journey into a subterranean world filled with dazzling cave formations and cave-dwelling creatures!

Join two young explorers and their trusted guide as they head off on a wonder-filled underground adventure. Slip through crevices, creep through passageways, and stop to admire the beauty of a fascinating ecosystem. From stalactites and stalagmites, to dripstone, shelfstone, and pearls - there is something to discover at every turn. Troglobites, glow worms, spiders, and bats make your acquaintance before your return to the light and familiarity of places above. With a lyrical, rhyming text, and illustrations that illuminate and bring warmth to an otherwise dark and damp environment, IN A CAVE is sure to please science and nature lovers of all ages.

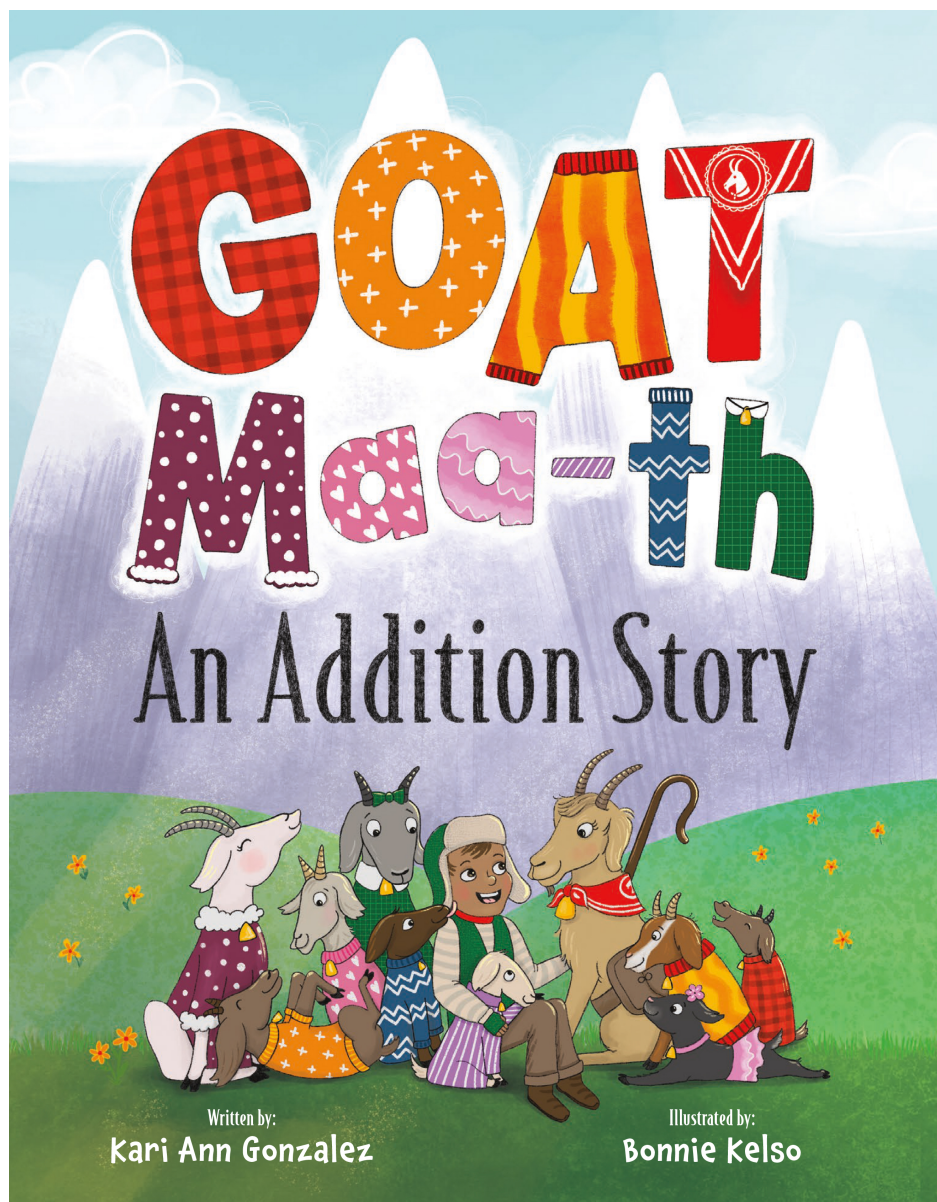


Anyone Else Awake? (January 6, 2026)

Written by Carmela LaVigna Coyle and illustrated by Bonnie Kelso.

Dawn moves through three phases, each one represented by different bird species awakening with their unique songs. A robin warbles first during Astronomical Dawn when the sun is still 18° below the horizon. This is followed by Nautical Dawn (12° below the horizon), heralded by the song of a chickadee. Finally, a towhee serenades the arrival of Civic Dawn when the sun is 6° below the horizon and objects can be clearly seen. On it goes as other birds jubilantly join The Dawn Chorus. This lyrical book about songbirds describes the unique voices of eleven common species.

Helpful back matter provides further information on how and why birds sing the way they do. A great read-aloud for classrooms, libraries, and homeschooling.



Goat Maa-th: An Addition Story (September 8, 2026)

Written by Kari Ann Gonzalez and illustrated by Bonnie Kelso.

An everyday trek up the mountain becomes the perfect opportunity for a young goat-herding mathematician to teach his goats a little maa-th. Trying to keep ten goats together proves to be a challenge, but mathematics makes everything easier, especially when your goats prove to be good at addition... and staying on track. The goats and their goatherd cross rivers, climb cliffs, and meet unexpected friends, all while playing with numbers in a fun, interactive way. With illustrations that cleverly depict number lines and ten frames, this picture book is sure to have young readers counting along.

A great read-aloud for classrooms, libraries, and homeschooling, this book includes early addition concepts including number lines, counting up, number bonds and grouping.