

Bridget's Beret

Author and Illustrator: Tom Lichtenheld

- **Summary:** This is the story of a little girl named Bridget who loves to draw more than anything else in the world, even ice cream! Her most favorite possession and the source of all her artistic inspiration was the big black beret that she wore when creating any kind of art. One day while painting outside, a huge gust of wind comes and blows Bridget's beret right off her head and off into the distance. Bridget frantically tries, but cannot find her beret anywhere. When the beret is lost, so is Bridget's inspiration. She tries many other types of hats, hoping that one will serve as an alternate to her beret, but it's no use. Bridget felt incredibly sad until she is convinced by her sister to create some posters for her lemonade stand. Once back at creating art, Bridget realizes that creativity and inspiration don't only come from a hat, but from within.
- **Awards received:** *Booklist* Top 10 Arts Books for Youth 2010
- **Reviews:** From *School Library Journal*: Bridget loves to draw, but she needs her black artist's beret as her muse. One day as she is outdoors working, it flies off into the wind, and she believes that her inspiration has flown with it. Other hats don't help and she stops drawing. But when her little sister begs her to make a sign for a lemonade stand, Bridget agrees. Once she starts painting, she finds that the art was inside her all along; in fact, her new paintings are more sophisticated and draw on the works of recognizable artists. Lichtenheld's ink, colored pencil, and watercolor cartoon illustrations, heavy on line and filled with childlike drawings, add humor and character to the story. Combined with Peter Reynolds's *The Dot* (2003) and *Ish* (2004, both Candlewick), the ideas for inspiration that are included in the back matter would work well for a lesson on artistic expression.—
Angela J. Reynolds, Annapolis Valley Regional Library, Bridgetown, NS, Canada
- **Author Information:** Tom Lichtenheld= author and illustrator
 - <http://www.tomlichtenheld.com/>
 - http://www.tomlichtenheld.com/childrens_books/index.html
 - <http://www.amazon.com/Tom-Lichtenheld/e/B001ILME0E>
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Besides a beret, where are some other places that artists can get inspiration for their artwork?
 - What are some ways of curing reader's block?
 - Why do you think that Bridget gets so much inspiration from being outside?
- **Curricular Activities**
 - Reading/oral language – Read the story aloud to the students incorporating props from the story to help illustrate, such as the different types of hats that Bridget tries on
 - Writing – Have students write a descriptive story of where Bridget's Beret went and who found it next

- Math – Teach lower elementary student math concepts, like addition and subtraction, using pictures drawn by the students
- Science – Learn about what causes strong winds like the one that blew Bridget’s beret away
- Social Studies – Discuss lemonade stands, what it takes to start one and run it. Have students set up their own “stand”, make the product, advertise the stand, sell the product, and decide what to do with the money, or use fake money and do the same process.
- Art – Study different artists like Van Gogh, Picasso, and Monet and the unique characteristics of their artwork
- Drama – Read the book aloud to the class and have students act out the scenes
- Music – Have students start with a blank piece of paper. Play different types, styles, and tempos of classical music and tell the students to draw what they feel when listening to the different music styles.
- Technology – Introduce students to art programs on the Internet where students use their mouse to draw and can learn about graphics
- Cooking/food – Find out what types of foods were popular back when artists like Picasso and Monet were painting, serve some of the foods to your students as they are working on their artwork

- **Related Books:**

- *Palazzo Inverso* by D.B. Johnson
- *Mimi’s Dada Catifesto* by Shelley Jackson
- *Art and Max* by David Wiesner
- *Mathterpieces* by Greg Tang

- **Other titles by Lichtenheld:**

- *Shark vs. Train*
- *Duck! Rabbit!*
- *Cloudette*
- *What Are You So Grumpy About?*
- *The OK Book*
- *It’s Not Fair!*
- *Yes Day*

- **Websites for further study or enrichment:**

- Art lessons by grade level for grades one through five:
http://www.harcourtschool.com/menus/art_express.html
- National Gallery of Art – Art Adventures – activities and projects for children:
<http://www.nga.gov/kids/>