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The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss

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Krull, Kathleen. *The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss*. Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Random House, 2004. ISBN 0375822984. \$16.95. 43 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Biographies; Picture books;

Subject: Authors--American--20th century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Artists; Children's literature -- Authorship -- Juvenile literature; Dr. Seuss--Childhood and Youth--Juvenile literature; Illustrators -- United States -- Biography -- Juvenile literature; Poets--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

How did the little German boy, Ted Geisel, come to be the internationally known author and illustrator of children's books Dr. Seuss? What did his mother do when he drew on his bedrooms walls with crayon? Did his high school art teacher recognize and encourage his talent? Which magazine first wanted to publish one of Ted's illustrations? Which of his boyhood toys accompanied him when he moved to a tiny apartment in New York's Greenwich Village to pursue his writing career? *The Boy on Fairfield Street* will answer this and other interesting biographical questions about Ted Geisel. 74 Fairfield Street, author Kathleen Krull explains, was just three blocks from the Springfield Massachusetts public library and six blocks from the zoo! Ted Geisel was always fooling around, loved practical jokes, loved doodling, and was voted "Least Likely to Succeed" by his college classmates. This picture-book biography explains the unique creative lens through which Ted viewed, drew, and wrote verse to describe his world, and his courage and positive attitude to pursue his career.

This interesting and warm account of Dr. Seuss's life describes how he found his niche as a writer and illustrator of books for children. It captures the attention of adults and young children alike. Johnson and Fancher's paintings portray the emotion in each aspect of Ted's growing up in the early 1900s amidst anti-German-American feelings. The book is peppered with Dr. Seuss illustrations, all of which are cited in the back of the book. It makes a reader thankful for publishers who were willing to take a chance on an author/illustrator who thought outside the traditionally accepted view for children's books. As the afterward of the book points out, thirteen years after Ted Geisel passed away in 1991, every one of his books are still available to read in libraries and are all still in print.