

>> From The Library of Congress in Washington DC.

>> This is Jane Gilchrist at The Library of Congress. Late September will mark the 12th year that book lovers of all ages have gathered in Washington, DC to celebrate the written word at The Library of Congress National Book Festival. The festival, which is free and open to the public, will be 2 days this year, Saturday, September 22nd, and Sunday, September 23rd, 2012. The festival will take place between 9th and 14th Streets on the National Mall, rain or shine. Hours will be from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, the 22nd, and from noon to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday the 23rd. For more details, visit www.loc.gov/bookfest. And now it is my pleasure to introduce singer/songwriter and author, Jewel, whose book is entitled, "That's What I Do," and who will appear in the Children's Pavilion at the 2012 National Book Festival. This Grammy nominated singer, who hails from Alaska, is well-known around the world after being discovered in a coffeehouse in San Diego. Thank you so much for joining us. So, Jewel, this is your first book.

>> Jewel: Thank you.

>> And it's a book for children. Tell me about what motivated you to embark on this project.

>> Jewel: Thank you. Yes; it's my children's book, and I really had wanted to do something like this for quite a while that incorporated music. And so me getting pregnant was finally the great [laughter] opportunity for me to be home and really focus on it. The book comes with a little CD of a song I wrote with the same lyrics, so you can listen to the song while you read it to your child, or just enjoy the book separately. And really I wrote it as a love story to my son. I wanted to try and find new, and interesting, and creative ways of telling him how much I love him that would sort of inspire visual images and stimulate him as he grew as well.

>> Wonderful. And you have sung it to him now. How does he react to it?

>> Jewel: He loves it. He loves music. I think every baby really loves music, and he really loves books. You know, he loves to look at the pages and the pictures, and touch, and point, and the illustrations by Angel Bates is just beautiful, and there are so many things to look at, like fish, and little different things that he can kind of learn the words to.

>> Up until now, you've been primarily known as a singer and songwriter. What challenges did you encounter when you moved into the world of the printed word in books for children?

>> Jewel: You know, my first foray into publishing was when I was about 20 and I had a book of bestselling poetry, which was funny because at the time the publishers really weren't interested in a book of poetry at all. It was not a very popular medium for publishers. They wanted an autobiography. And so I worked into the deal that I had to be allowed to do a book of poetry first before they got their autobiography. [Laughter] And it ended up being really successful, and really successful with young teen readers as well, which I was really proud of. I love poetry, and I

think it's transformative if you can find poetry that you love to read. And so I was really, really honored that the book did so well and inspired young readers to get into poetry, and that made them want to write more importantly. I can't tell you how many kids came and said that they all started writing and journaling. I think it's so important whether you're going to become an author or not, to get in touch with your feelings. It's such a great tool for life. And for me, you know, it has been the cheapest therapy, and I really wanted my son to share a love of reading and the adventures of using your mind, and where you can travel in your mind. It was different writing for thinking about -- I never had had a baby before and being pregnant still didn't know what it was like and what kids would necessarily be interested in, and so that was probably my biggest challenge going into the children's book form. But just really put my imagination into it, and was really pleased with the process. It marries a album I did called "The Merry Goes Round" --

>> Yes.

>> Jewel: -- which is an album I wrote for my son, where, again, I didn't want to talk down to kids. I really wanted the true [phonetic] music that the whole family would enjoy; because I have so many friends with kids, and they -- the children's music makes them usually want to kind of stab their ears out I think. [Laughter] And I wanted to make sure I did the same thing with the book, it didn't talk down to kids, it let them grow and develop, and as they get older they get new meaning out of the words.

>> Great. Well, people, certainly your fans, enjoy hearing other people sing. Why do you think it's important for people to hear stories, as well as read them silently to themselves?

>> Jewel: I think that for myself I know your brain develops in different ways. When you learn to read you're using different parts, and then when you're hearing something audibly, you're learning different ways in stimulating some parts of your brain. And so both are really important. But they learn so much more through your voice, through your inflection, through your imagination when you use dramatic storytelling. There's a lot more getting said and communicated than just the story.

>> Yes.

>> Jewel: And I think that's what makes it really special.

>> Yes. When you read, what draws you to a particular story?

>> Jewel: Oh, gosh. You mean favorite book or --

>> Do you have a favorite genre?

>> Jewel: -- do you mean -- oh, [laughs] you know, it's funny, my reading tastes are a lot like my music. I'm [laughter] sort of all over the map. For poets I've always really loved Pablo Neruda and Octavio Paz, and Bukowski. I really like honest writers that tend to be very honest about the good, bad and the ugly of themselves. I like [inaudible] journals a lot because of that. She was just so honest about [inaudible] qualities

about herself, but it was so refreshing to see somebody use writing not as propaganda, but just to tell the truth about themselves. And that really inspired me to want to become an honest writer. I love all the Russian novelists, probably some of my favorites. I tend to go back to them again and again. In a book called "The Short Stories" are really great and really inspired me to write short stories a lot.

>> On the television show, "The Voice," you helped aspiring singers select good songs that showcased their voices. What advice do you have to help aspiring readers find books that interest them?

>> Jewel: Yes; finding great books can be kind of hard. I think the best thing is to ask friends for recommendations. It's so hard to really get. I mean, you know, music you can listen to at a glance, and getting into a book you sometimes have to give it some time to get into it. But you can never go wrong with the classics. The classics are classics for a reason. Finding books -- new books for me is a little harder, and I tend to go off recommendations.

>> [Laughs] Now, do you have plans to write other books for children? I know that you are a published poet, you've talked about that. Is there perhaps a book of poetry for kids somewhere on the horizon?

>> Jewel: I would love to do a book of poems for kids with illustrations, and I have other storybooks I'd like to tell too. So yes, I would love just to be a series for me and to be able to keep doing them. It's a lot of fun.

>> Can you tell us about now maybe some of your ideas?

>> Jewel: I have one called "Sammy, the Spider" that is just about the adventures of a spider that wants to move from the bathroom to the kitchen. [Laughter] And then I have one about Sarah, the swan that likes her dreams better than being awake, but then one of her dreams sort of turns into a nightmare, and then she realizes she should be getting up when her mom says. [Laughs]

>> Do they have -- have they come from songs, or from your --

>> Jewel: Yes.

>> -- poems?

>> Jewel: Those are both from songs; yes.

>> Wonderful. We look forward to seeing them. Well, we've been hearing from singer and author, Jewel, who will appear on Saturday, September 22nd in the Children's Pavilion at the National Book Festival on the National Mall. On behalf of The Library of Congress National Book Festival, thank you.

>> Jewel: Thank you so much.

>> This has been a presentation of The Library of Congress. Visit us at
loc.gov.