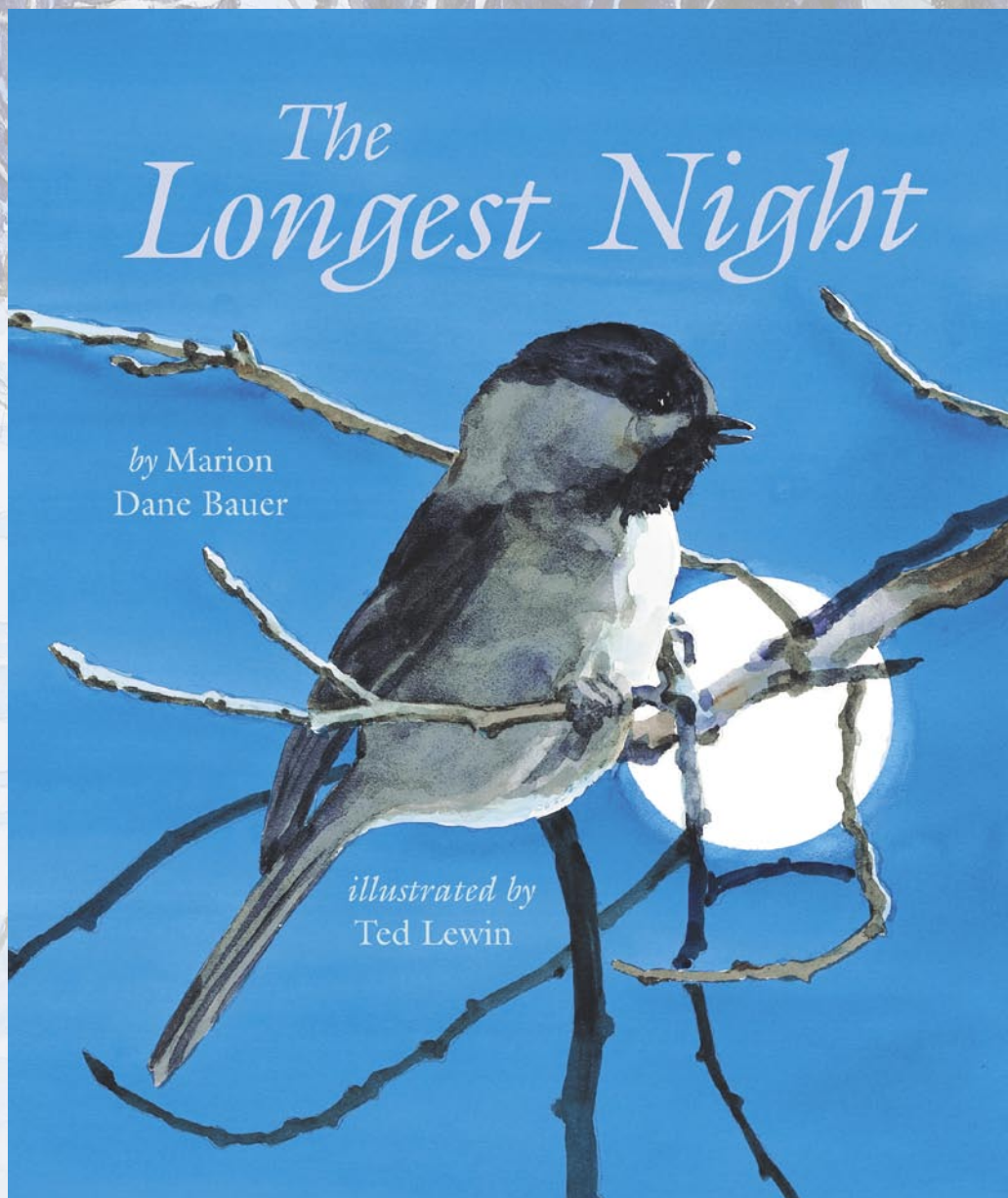


A Conversation with... Marion Dane Bauer and Ted Lewin



"What I hope children will take away from this book is hope itself, the understanding that the least of us can 'bring back the sun,' however ordinary our songs may seem. We need only sing them!" —**Marion Dane Bauer**

"I'd like readers to experience a sense of the solitude, mystery, and beauty of the night woods, and the usually unseen creatures who leave their tracks in the snow." —**Ted Lewin**

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How THE LONGEST NIGHT came to be...

Marion Dane Bauer

"The idea for THE LONGEST NIGHT began with a question. It occurred to me one day to wonder why it is that the longest night of the year is the first day of winter, not the middle of it. Wouldn't it seem to make more sense for the longest night to fall in the middle of winter? And then I heard a climatologist talking, and he gave the explanation. He said that it is the cold and snow locked into the earth that brings on and holds the long cold of winter, even though, following the winter solstice, the sun is a bit more present each day. And I thought, How true! The first day of winter is really the beginning of new light, even of spring. It is only our hearts that have to wait to thaw. And that idea eventually grew into this story of a small bird who calls back the sun.

"I never have specific images in my mind when I write. I am a word person. And I am glad to wait to discover the vision the artist will bring to my story. But in this case I did see the natural world that surrounds us, in all its lushness, all its beauty; and that's what I hoped the illustrations would convey. Ted couldn't have done that more beautifully."





Ted Lewin

"Marion Dane Bauer's evocative text was my first inspiration for *THE LONGEST NIGHT*. Then I envisioned the illustrative possibilities of the dark night woods finally illuminated by the sun's rays.

"I have friends in Massachusetts whose house is surrounded by beautiful woods. I called them every day to ask, 'Is it snowing yet!?' Finally they called to say they had two feet of snow. I hopped on the first train I could get. The next day I was in the woods knee-deep in snow, camera in hand, and happy as a pig in mud.

"I have extensive picture files on every animal you could imagine that I've been collecting since I was ten years old. Also, I have thousands of pictures of animals that I've taken myself. I photographed the chickadees in my backyard and the crows in the Florida Everglades. These animals are all present in my friends' woods, but nowhere to be seen in three feet of snow.

"I wanted to create a night mood by using just three colors, so I toned each sheet of paper with a dark layer of Windsor Blue (green shade). We made some test proofs to make sure we got the best color. Then I painted all the details over the dark blue wash using a mixture of Ultramarine Blue and Van Dyke Brown, a denser blue-brown for the trees, and a less dense, brown-blue hue for the animals. The hot pink and orange rays of the sun at the end made a striking contrast to the dark night mood."



Marion Dane Bauer Winner of a Newbery Honor for her book *ON MY HONOR*, Marion Dane Bauer is the author of more than thirty books for young people, including picture books, easy readers, novelty books, and middle-grade novels. Her impressive list of awards includes the Kerlan Award from the University of Minnesota for her body of work and a Jane Addams Peace Association Award, in addition to the Newbery Honor. This *NEW YORK TIMES* best-selling author is on the staff of Vermont College's MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults program. A native Midwesterner, Marion Dane Bauer lives in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Ted Lewin Caldecott Honor winning illustrator Ted Lewin always knew he wanted to be an artist. A children's book illustrator for more than thirty years, he has a signature watercolor style that has garnered him many awards including a silver medal as well as the Hamilton King Award from the Society of Illustrators and a Caldecott Honor. Ted Lewin and his wife, illustrator Betsy Lewin, have traveled all over the world and collaborated on many books based on their adventures. They live in Brooklyn, New York, in a brownstone near Pratt Institute, where they met.

Breathtakingly illustrated, this inspiring story captures a beautifully snowy night woods and the warmth of the dawn as a tiny woodland creature summons a new day.

The Longest Night

Marion Dane Bauer • illustrated by Ted Lewin

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