



She Gives a Toot

Some memories are particularly vivid for good reason. When Linda Gramatky Smith '64 compared current editions of the classic children's book *Little Toot*, written and illustrated by her father, Hardie Gramatky, with a 1939 original that she bought on eBay, it was like *The Wizard of Oz* being played in reverse.

Over nearly seven decades of printing and re-printing, "the rich, vibrant primary colors Dad used had faded to insipid grays and oranges," she says.

No more, however. Thanks to the efforts of Gramatky, self-proclaimed as the torch-bearer for her father's highly praised watercolors, Putnam Penguin has published a restored version of the book about the silly little tug that hates to work.

The publisher went back to the original artwork, some of which is in the New York Public Library, and also used some never-before-published color sketches from the original manuscript. Those sketches weren't used, as Linda explains, because "the original book was published during the Depression, so he was allowed only a limited number of color illustrations."

The new 104-page version, published in 2007, has prompted a nice round of publicity for the work of Hardie Gramatky, who was an illustrator for Walt Disney from 1929 to 1936, when he moved to New York City. It was there, one day in 1939, that he was inspired by seeing a tugboat on the East River that didn't seem to want to work.

NPR's *Weekend Edition* with Scott Simon, for example, focused on the book last Oct. 26. "It's a real, honest-to-goodness classic, beautifully restored to the old, fantastic color," said children's author Daniel Pinkwater. He also noted how "the language is not dumbed down. This is not assuming that every kid has got a very limited vocabulary. And it's assuming that there's going to be some conversation perhaps with the adults reading this."

And at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Mass., the exhibition *Toot and Re-Toot: The Return of Hardie Gramatky's Little Toot* is on display through May 4.



The NPR interview and other *Little Toot* news www.littletoot.org/press.asp