

## Author Visits with Holly Thompson

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**Holly Thompson** is the author of the middle grade verse novel *Falling into the Dragon's Mouth* (Henry Holt/Macmillan); the young adult verse novels *Orchards* (APALA Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature) and *The Language Inside* (both Delacorte/Random House); picture books *Listening to Trees: George Nakashima, Woodworker* (Neal Porter/Holiday House), *One Wave at a Time: A Story of Grief and Healing* (Albert Whitman), *Twilight Chant* (Clarion), *The Wakame Gatherers* (Lee & Low/Shen's); and the novel *Ash* (Stone Bridge Press). She compiled and edited *Tomo: Friendship Through Fiction—An Anthology of Japan Teen Stories* (Stone Bridge Press). She is a longtime resident of Japan, where she teaches writing and literature at Yokohama City University, and she now splits her time between Japan and Massachusetts. She served as Regional Advisor for the Japan Chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators for many years, and she writes fiction, poetry and nonfiction for children, teens and adults. Visit her website [www.hatbooks.com](http://www.hatbooks.com) and her blog [hatbooks.blogspot.com](http://hatbooks.blogspot.com).



Holly has presented, delivered keynotes and led writing workshops at conferences, schools and universities in the U.S., Japan, Cambodia, Australia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and Mongolia. She offers presentations in person or remotely to students in grades K through 12, university students, teachers, parents, and adult writers and readers. Most presentations include interactive creativity-focused components, and she can combine presentations and adapt them to fit a particular curriculum unit, language level of students, teaching focus, or specific workshop need. Some presentations are suited to shorter sessions; others work well in longer sessions. Holly also delivers keynotes and assembly talks and will work with schools in half-day or full-day intensives, plus residencies of two to five days.

### Children's Presentations (Grades K – 6)

**Listening to Trees.** After reading *Listening to Trees: George Nakashima, Woodworker* and learning more about Nakashima's process for making furniture, we'll focus on the haibun combination of haiku and prose in the story, zoom in on several haiku, and try writing some maker-focused haiku.

**The Wakame Gatherers.** This introduction to Japanese seaweed cultivation includes a demonstration of sporeling tying and wakame rehydration, plus a brief reading. This presentation elaborates on *The Wakame Gatherers* and fits into educational units on the sea, family, grandparents, food and nutrition, cultures, and Japan, and can include storyboarding.

**Twilight Chant.** After exploring the text of *Twilight Chant* about animals at twilight, students select an animal that is active at twilight, brainstorm, gather details and create a class poem that includes accompanying actions.

**Poem Fest.** This introduction to poems and poem writing for young writers uses a range of short form example poems both serious and silly as prompts for students to generate their own poems.

**The Work Behind a Picture Book.** This presentation details the work process of a picture book--the story of how a book evolves from idea, observation, experience, research, imagination, writing and revision into a manuscript, a storyboard, dummy, teamwork, and a final book. A picture book storyboarding activity can be included.

**One Wave at a Time.** This presentation offers a gentle introduction to grief and loss, followed by a reading of the lyrical text of *One Wave at a Time*. A demo of wave action depicts emotions arriving in waves. Memory poem or memory box activities may follow.

## Middle Grade or Young Adult Presentations and Workshops (Grades 4 – 12)

**Listening to Trees and Haibun.** After reading *Listening to Trees: George Nakashima, Woodworker* and discussing Nakashima's journeys, students will learn about the Japanese form of haibun, which combines haiku with prose, and used most famously by 17<sup>th</sup> century poet Matsuo Bashō. Depending on time students may draft and share their own haibun.

**Notice Poems and Poems with Plot.** After reading scenes written in poetry and the [NoticePoems](#) companion series to *Falling into the Dragon's Mouth*, students will learn poetry tools to tackle writing poems about details in their own immediate environments and the stories they inspire.

**Insiders and Outsiders in *Falling into the Dragon's Mouth*.** A discussion of the process of building scenes and examination of the insider and outsider dynamics at play in the school and community settings of the novel. Can include notice poem or action poem writing.

**Bullying in *Orchards*/*Falling into the Dragon's Mouth*.** This talk covers bullying issues that surface in *Orchards* and/or *Falling into the Dragon's Mouth*. Through questions about characters, motivations, actions and reactions, this presentation broaches topics of bullying and bystanding, and leads students to create individual or collaborative poems.

**The Real Worlds of *Orchards*.** This presentation offers a visual tour of rural Japanese villages that were models for Kohama village in *Orchards*, introduces customs and traditions that appear in the novel, and reveals the complex, challenging, but gratifying process of researching and writing a novel. Students may begin work on a story scene.

**Playing with Short Forms: Haiku, Tanka, Cinquain, Haibun and More.** An introduction to various Japanese and Japan-inspired forms of poetry leads to quick writing, then drafting and further development of poems to share.

**Poem Fest.** A dive into poem writing for young writers using example poems both serious and humorous as prompts for young students to generate their own poems. Possible categories might include [Notice Poems](#) that focus on community or [Hope Poems](#) that focus on local natural environments.

**Story Seeds--Preserving, Sowing and Growing Story Ideas.** A look at the methods writers employ to gather ideas and nurture them into creative works of fiction, with examples from Holly's own story seeds turned fiction or narrative poem. Followed by a bit of on-the-spot story growing.

**From Scribbles to Published Novel.** With images and examples, this presentation details the stages of writing a novel as it evolves from notes and scene sketches to messy drafts; reveals tools of revision and editing; and illustrates how perseverance, tenacity, patience and teamwork lie behind a published novel.

**From Fact to Fiction.** This writing workshop centers on generating stories from observation and experience and helps students make the leap from recounting actual events as they happened to creating compelling narratives. Students are prompted into crafting a plot outline and drafting a scene of one plot point.

**Narrative Poetry.** This workshop/presentation introduces story arc plus techniques of narrative poetry via a range of contemporary narrative poems. Students choose prompts then write, share and perform their own narrative poems.

**Telling Your Stories in Verse.** This presentation and writing workshop for students of all writing levels and backgrounds introduces students to the varied approaches to writing novels in free verse—and reveals narrative and poetry tools and techniques students then employ in crafting their own scenes.

**Bento—Japanese Style Boxed Lunches.** For culinary arts/cooking classes, this presentation introduces students to design, color and nutritional concepts central to bento making, demonstrates the making and wrapping of a bento lunch, then invites students to create their own using the basic bento principles referenced in *Orchards*.

***Tomo: Friendship Through Fiction—Background and Stories.*** This presentation introduces the reasons for creating the *Tomo* anthology and shares background and updates on Japan since the 2011 earthquake, and discusses Japan-connected short stories.

## Intensives/Residencies for Grades 4–12:

### Half-day or Full-day Intensives | Two to Five-day Residencies

**Essay Writing for College Applications.** This intensive or residency, especially for students applying to U.S. colleges or universities, is an opportunity for students to brainstorm, plan, write, revise and polish various Common Application and supplemental essays for the college application process. Students build writing and storytelling skills for shaping unique, compelling essays. Workshopping and one-to-one conferences are included in residencies.

**Poetry.** Poetry intensives or residencies focus on exploring sample poems, building collaborative poems, then writing and revising original poems. Residencies may culminate in poem sharing, multi-media projects, zines or poetry open mic.

**Scenes in Verse.** This intensive or residency introduces students to narrative poetry, novels in verse, and novels in poems, and provides students with the poetry tools and confidence they need to create their own moving scenes, stories in verse, or linked poems, then demonstrates the power of revision. Residencies may culminate in readings/performances or school zines.

**Multimedia Poetry.** This intensive or residency introduces multimedia poetry—poetry combined with video, still images, audio, typography, animation, movement, live performance, or other content forms. After viewing and discussing examples, students will brainstorm and begin drafting or adapting poems for a multimedia poetry project. Students will use whatever tech or traditional tools available to them to generate their multimedia poetry projects. This residency may culminate in viewings and performances.

**Situations to Short Stories.** This intensive or residency guides students through the process of writing short stories and tackles plot planning, beginnings and endings, structure, point of view, characterization, dialogue and setting. Holly’s situation plotting methods can be used to jumpstart student stories or novel scenes.

**Story Starts to Finished Stories.** This residency pushes students to write original openings for several types of short stories using a range of prompts, then has them select one of these story starts to develop into a complete short story. This residency is best done through visits spread over several weeks allowing students time for writing between sessions, and may culminate in a short story zine or collection.

## Adult/Parent/Teacher Presentations

**The Power of Picture Books.** In this PD workshop for parents and teachers, we explore picture book anatomy and craft, and examine picture books for various ages and purposes, and discuss reasons to continue to engage with picture books long after children are reading on their own.

**The Craft of Picture Books.** This presentation introduces picture book anatomy and the picture book creation process. After close examination of some contemporary picture books, creative prompts and storyboarding exercises lead participants into drafting their own picture book stories.

**Poetry Serving Story Serving Teens.** This active hands-on workshop for teachers of all subjects delves into reasons why poetry is essential for teens and ways to engage teens in reading, writing, performing, and sharing poetry.

**Practices and Strategies for Cultivating Young Writers.** In this PD workshop for teachers, we explore writing by responding to texts and prompts, drafting, reflecting and sharing. We touch on reading for writing, scaffolding, modeling, drafting, revision, feedback, evaluation, audience and purpose, and we discuss practices and strategies for developing an enduring school culture of writing.

**Writing Verse Novels for Young Adults.** This talk and workshop introduces writers or teachers to the many styles, structures and approaches to verse novels today, delves into elements of narrative verse, and explores why novels in verse resonate with teens. Participants will be guided through drafting a scene in verse—a generative exercise meaningful for both prose and verse writers.

**Narrative Poetry.** This workshop/presentation introduces story arc and elements and techniques of narrative poetry via a range of compelling contemporary examples and leads participants into writing and sharing narrative poems.

**Crafting Intercultural Fiction—Writing Across Cultures.** This workshop for writers offers tools and guidance for writing intercultural fiction and stories set outside the U.S. or outside a writer’s heritage or culture of origin. Dos and don’ts are discussed with particular focus on character development, setting portrayal, bilingual dialogue, non-English words, and traps to avoid when writing across cultures in picture books and novels.

**MG/YA Novel Workout.** This workshop is for writers with a full or partial draft of a middle grade or YA novel-in-progress. In this workshop we’ll tackle exercises, take up tools and employ techniques and strategies for planning, shaping and revising. Participants will gain a better grasp of their novels and a forward direction and momentum.

**Tackling Novel Revision: Techniques and Tips.** Your novel’s first draft is done; now to revise. But how to create order from chaos? How to keep the big picture in mind while focusing on details? How to keep track of story elements and deepen themes? This workshop for writers offers helpful techniques and practical approaches to tackling novel revision.

**Editing a Fiction Anthology—Working with Original Stories and Stories in Translation.** Many writers consider editing an anthology. What tools do you need before you start? What will an agent or editor expect in your proposal? How can you create a unique angle? This talk divulges challenges and rewards of compiling an anthology of fiction.

## Keynotes and Assemblies

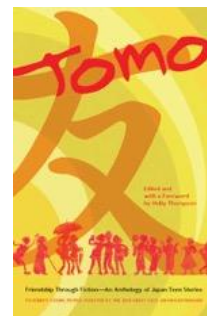
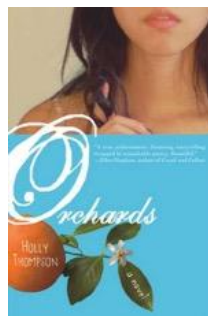
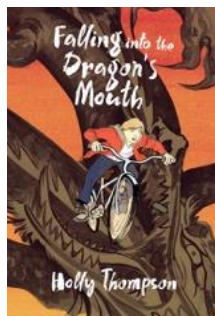
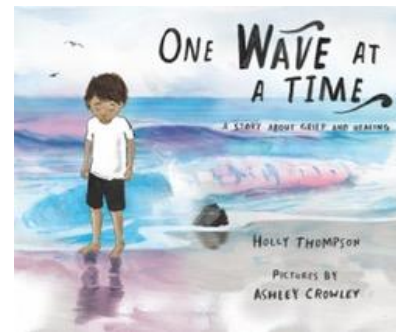
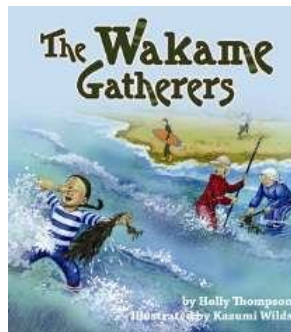
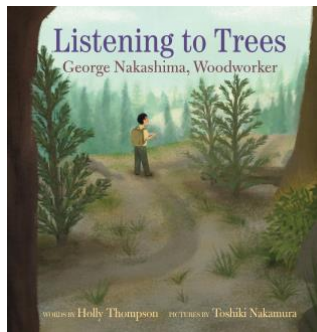
**Assemblies.** Assembly presentations may include a particular theme or writing focus chosen by the school and/or feature Holly's cross-cultural writing journey and the importance of the craft of writing.

**Keynotes.** Holly will prepare keynote addresses or roundtable presentations on writing from your heart; writing across borders; poetry serving story serving teens; intersections of truth and fiction; and other topics.

## Have an Idea?

Do you have an idea for a presentation or workshop with Holly Thompson? Share your thoughts with her for a presentation you'd like for your school or organization. Contact Holly Thompson: [hatbooks@gmail.com](mailto:hatbooks@gmail.com)

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# 2024–2025 Holly Thompson Author Visit Rates

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## 2024–2025 Author Visit Fees

### Japan

JPY100,000 full day

JPY70,000 half day (max 3 hours)

plus travel expenses

### U.S. and International

USD1,000 full day

USD700 half day (max 3 hours)

plus travel expenses

### Remote Visits (Zoom, Google, Skype)

- No Cost Meet the Author Visit: 20 minutes free Q &A for classes and book clubs that have read Holly's books; 10 minutes free meet-and-greet otherwise
- In-Depth Visit: USD100 or equivalent; 30-40 minutes.

*Note:* For remote sessions, to make the visit more meaningful, it's preferable that students read the book beforehand.

*Important:* No recording of Zoom, Google, Skype Sessions without permission from the author.

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