

JANUARY 2016 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY

DEALING WITH MY MESSY, ROUGH LIST OF PICTURE BOOK IDEAS

BY CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER PHILLIPS

The past two Novembers, I've participated in the Picture Book Idea Month, or PiBoldMo, event coordinated by children's author Tara Lazar. It's super fun. (I recently posted a [YouTube video](#) about the pros and cons of participating in writing challenges.)

You'll see that my lists are nothing fancy. Lots of half-formed ideas, weird stuff, floating thoughts. This is how I work. I'm all about volume . . . lots of ideas, fast, followed by a whittling down process. Other writers may do it differently. From 2014, I wrote, rewrote and rewrote (a million times) two manuscripts. Those are out with agents/editors now.

I'm pulling more ideas from 2014 along with ones from my 2015 list.

What's next? Three things:

- It's important that I squeeze in research time to see what's already been written for some of my ideas. Will they be unique enough?
- I also need to noodle on them more. Since I'll have to live with a book project for a long time, I need to really like the topics at a gut level. And they have to be suitable for young picture book readers.
- I've decided to sign up this year for the [12x12 challenge](#). That's where writers draft 12 rough picture book manuscripts over 12 months. I do well with these types of deadlines. I also learn a lot from the online writing community.

I promise to report back on how it's going and what I'm learning as I take my PiBoldMo lists further!

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