



Rebecca J. Gomez [She/Her] can't get the sound of her mother reading poetry out of her head, not that she's ever actually tried. That must be why she's drawn to poetry as a writer and a reader. She writes verse novels and picture books (mostly rhyming), and when she's not doing that she likes to read, create art, watch movies, and drag her family to the woods for a hike.

Rebecca is accepting applications for: Rhyming or verse/lyrical manuscripts with a traditional story arc, whether fiction or nonfiction.

Rebecca is accepting applications from: unagented/unpublished creators only

1. What's one non-publishing-related career that you wish you could have?

I think it would be great to own and operate a small bed and breakfast. Hospitality is one of my gifts, and I'm a good cook!

2. If you could have dinner with one person, dead or alive, who would it be and why?

It's hard to pick just one, but I think I'll go with Sharon Creech since she's one of my favorite children's book authors.

3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?

Tough to narrow down, but here are some contenders:

- BEAR SNORES ON by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman (The language and imagery!)
- THE GIANT OF JUM by Elli Woollard, illustrated by Benji Davies (The voice, the refrain, the humor!)
- MARS NEEDS MOMS by Berkley Breathed (It's funny AND makes me cry)
- THE FORGETFUL KNIGHT by Michelle Robinson, illustrated by Fred Blunt (So funny and fun to read aloud)

- A DANCE LIKE STARLIGHT by Kristy Dempsey, illustrated by Floyd Cooper (It's lyrical and moving)

4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

FEDERICO AND THE WOLF being nominated for three different state's children's choice awards.

5. What about mentoring excites you most?

It's hard to describe, but I love the moment (if you can call it a moment) when a mentee's manuscript really comes together and they can see a future for it and their writing in general. Plus, it's just really fun to help someone whip a promising manuscript into shape!

6. What are your strengths as a mentor?

The actual revising process is probably my biggest strength as a mentor, because revising is my favorite. But I'm also a pretty good cheerleader, metaphorically speaking. 😊

7. What is your feedback/critique style like?

I like the sandwich method. I begin with what I like or what is working in a manuscript, then go into details about what is not working and how to fix it, then end with more positivity/encouragement. I believe there is hope for every story if the one writing it is willing to do the work.

8. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?

I'm looking for someone who is open to constructive, but sometimes difficult feedback. Someone who has a good grasp of story and a knack for language and who likes to laugh and appreciate the little beauties and pleasures in life. Bonus points for anyone who enjoys reading picture books aloud to themselves, their pets, or reluctant teenagers when young children aren't around!

9. Who are you not the best mentor for?

I am not the best mentor for someone who primarily writes manuscripts without a traditional story arc or someone whose stories are didactic or promote specific ideologies.

10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?

I'm looking forward to working with a mentee to polish a manuscript (or maybe two or three) and helping them develop pitches and queries for their stories. Beyond that, I'm very flexible and want to be open and available to helping my mentee in any way I can, whether that means sharing industry insights and experiences, social media advice, or deciding which ideas are worth pursuing.

11. What is your style of communication like?

I love email for general communication. I prefer using google docs for sharing manuscript comments. I'm responsive, which means I try to answer emails the same day if possible. Sometimes people find chatting over Zoom helpful, and I'm open to that as well. Informal is good, but scheduled check-ins are definitely possible for those who like to be more organized. 😊

12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?

Aside from what I mentioned above regarding what I'm looking for in a mentee, I am looking for someone who has a strong sense for story and clear skill, but could use some help in polishing a manuscript and taking the next steps. Manuscripts that grab me often have a lyrical quality, whether they are rhyming or not, a strong sense of place, and universal appeal. If a manuscript can make me chuckle *and* tug my heartstrings, you're ahead of the game. I'd also like to see applicants that are clearly dedicated to their writing and willing to put in the work for the long haul and not just for one manuscript.

13. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?

Be yourself. Give me a sense of what makes you tick as a writer. Submit a manuscript that you believe showcases your skills. Easy, right? 😊

14. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?

The journey toward publication can be long and often discouraging, but I believe that if you have the skills and the determination, you will get there eventually. Keep reading, keep writing, keep improving. And even more importantly, enjoy the journey!