

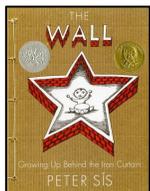
**Peter Sis**

Peter Sis needs no introduction. His award-winning books have captivated audiences of all ages since the late 1980's. If you have ever had the privilege of hearing Sis talk, you know that he is full of humor and wisdom.

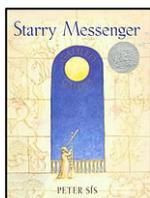
Sis was born in Czechoslovakia, the son of a filmmaker and an artist. From the beginning, he viewed the world through those eyes. Many of his works tell of life experiences. The “magic and strange” images from one of his father’s films sparked Sis’s interest in creating *Tibet Through the Red Box*. The birds in *The Conference of the Birds* symbolize freedom because they could go wherever they wanted, unlike many people in Czechoslovakia. His fascination with Western culture is evident in his autobiography, *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. There are many other deep connections Sis has made through his many books, all influenced by his life experiences.

In an interview with NPR, Sis said “the really connecting thing in all my books is the fact that somebody’s dreaming about places or searching for someplace, going places.” As a reader, you are able to sense this strong connection, this dreaming and searching. His brilliant illustrations make the stories come alive. From a boy in the bath making dinosaurs come alive, to a neighborhood transforming before your eyes, to Galileo’s struggle, Sis’s works ask readers to let go of what they know and see the world through new eyes - to appreciate “how wonderful life is.” It is no wonder that he has been awarded so many honors and such recognition for his contribution to children’s literature.

### Selected Bibliography



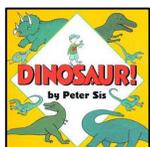
*The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (2007). In this Caldecott Honor picturebook, Sis tells the story of his own life through vibrant illustrations. Told using frames, *The Wall* allows readers to understand what it was like during the Soviet rule of Czechoslovakia. True to his style, Sis uses bold colors and blends fantasy with reality.



*Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei* (1996). Galileo’s story is complicated and complex. In this picturebook biography, Sis makes the story more accessible to young readers. Galileo’s life is told from childhood through his tumultuous relationship with the church. Sis brilliantly weaves his own incredible illustrations with handwritten notes from Galileo’s work.



*Madlenka* (2000). Madlenka has a loose tooth and wants her entire neighborhood to know it! She ventures around her city block, telling everyone she can about her tooth. Her block is home to neighbors who have come from all around the world, bringing their rich traditions with them. This charming picturebook will have you studying the intricate details in each illustration, searching for the treasures that each neighbor holds.



*Dinosaur* (2005). In yet another one of my favorites, a young boy takes a bath with his toy dinosaur. Right before his eyes, the dinosaur comes alive and other dinosaurs chase it all over the land! In this funny book, your imagination (and dinosaurs) run wild!

## Selected Awards

- 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Award
- Caldecott Honor (*The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*, *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei*, and *Tibet Through the Red Box*)
- Pura Belpré Award (Pam Muñoz Ryan's *The Dreamer*)
- Robert F. Sibert Medal (*The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*)
- The New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year (*Rainbow Rhino*, *Beach Ball*, *Follow the Dream*, *Komodo!*, *The Three Golden Keys*, and *The Tree of Life: Charles Darwin*)
- New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Books of the Year (*Madlenka*, *Madlenka's Dog*, and *The Tree of Life: Charles Darwin*)
- ALA notable book (*Madlenka's Dog*, *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei*, and *Tibet Through the Red Box*)
- Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor Book (*A Small Tall Tale from the Far Far North*, *Komodo!*, *Tibet Through the Red Box*)
- MacArthur Fellowship

## Links of Interest

- Peter Sis's Website: <http://www.petersis.com>
- Interviews
  - CBS interview: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/sis-stays-in-touch-with-his-past/>
  - NPR Interview: <http://www.npr.org/2011/11/16/142396491/in-birds-sis-makes-a-dream-world-for-grown-ups>
  - Reading Rockets video interview: <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/sis>
  - Zuzu Interview: <http://www.zuzu.org/sisinterview.html>

**Peter Sis is a member of USBBY. Why not join him?**



This featured author profile was prepared by Bettie Parsons Barger, January 2016.