

Author's Spotlight

SUZANNE SANTILLAN

by Grace Nail



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Is there a trend happening in children's book publishing? In today's electronic buzz, that's the question asked in writing conferences, blogs, and the publishing industry.

"Love 'em or hate 'em, I think that electronic books are going to be a part of our future," states SCBWI member, children's book author, and graphic artist Suzanne Santillan. "I think this will lead to more opportunities for authors rather than less."

Santillan's book, *Grandma's Pear Tree/El Peral de Abuela* (c2010) "was originally written in verse ... and was rejected 14 times before Raven Tree Press expressed any interest, but only if it wasn't written in verse. It took two months to create the new version and ... reduce the word count by one-half."

Grandma's Pear Tree is now on Apple's APPs for the iPhone and iPad. Good news for Santillan, whose book won a 2010 Moonbeam Award, given by the Jenkins Group and *Independent Publisher Magazine*.

Even with developing trends and new opportunities in book publishing, the journey as a children's book author starts early. For Santillan, it began in high school. However, she didn't pursue her writing dream until her oldest son was in third grade and she met friend and author, Sarah Wones Tomp.

Flash forward to 2011. Now they have formed a partnership in Writing on the Sidewalk.wordpress.com blog. Their mantra is "Two moms talking about books, writing and a million two reasons to procrastinate."

"Shortly before *Grandma's Pear Tree* was released, I was actively looking into ways to help promote my book and a blog was one method that was continuously mentioned," states Santillan. "At the same time, Sarah was considering doing her own blog but didn't know if she had enough time to devote to the project. We both decided to team up and the rest is history."

According to Santillan, *Grandma's Pear Tree* as an APP "makes perfect sense since this appears to be the wave of the future." Furthermore, Delta Publishing is the parent company for Raven Tree Press. "It is the leader in the bi-lingual education field and they are constantly striving to keep up with the latest trends in publishing."

Santillan further added that setting parameters was important when they started Writing on the Sidewalk.com. "We had both done some research on other blogs and we agreed to keep our children's lives private. That is why I refer to my boys as Son #1 (18 years old and in college) and Son #2 (15 years old and in high school). We also prescribe to the adage, 'If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.'"

Aside from writing children's books and keeping up with her blog, Santillan also works as a freelance artist for more than 100 library reference books. Visit her at www.SuzanneSantillan.com or <http://writingonthe sidewalk.wordpress.com>.