

• Meet the Author •

Linda Glaser

Interview conducted by Toni Buzzeo, career media specialist and author (visit www.tonibuzzeo.com).



Photo from www.lindaglaserauthor.net

Linda Glaser is the award-winning author of over 25 children's books including immigrant novel, *Bridge to America*, which is a Banks Street Best Children's Book of the Year and a Sydney Taylor Notable. She feels fortunate to have a career that enables her to write what she believes in and cares deeply about. In *Bridge to America* and *Emma's Poem*, Ms. Glaser is grateful for the opportunity to share with readers her passion and appreciation for immigrants.

How did your interest in Emma Lazarus begin? What drew you to her as a subject to research and write about?

LG: I grew up in New York and visited the Statue of Liberty when I was a child. I'm not sure how I'd learned the lines, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." But I remember looking up at the huge statue and feeling those lines pounding in my heart. I was Jewish and I loved to write poems. So I found it most inspiring that a young Jewish woman had written that poem.

What aspects of Emma Lazarus's personality did you most want to share with your young readers and why?

LG: Emma Lazarus spoke out for what she believed in. That was highly unusual for women of her time. If she hadn't been like that, I don't think she would have ever dreamed of giving the Statue of Liberty such a powerful voice.

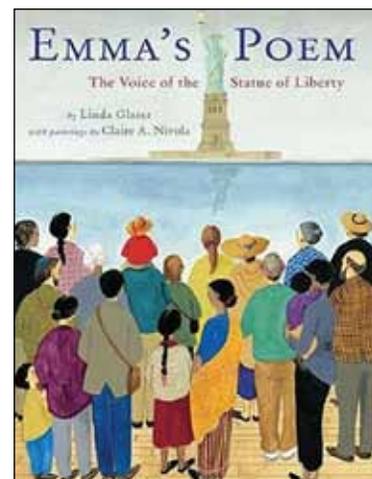
How do you think Emma Lazarus would have responded to Arizona's tough immigration law? What would she have done with her feelings?

LG: Emma Lazarus was a humanitarian. I believe she

would have been a champion of immigrants today and would have written passionate articles and letters to the editor as she did when she was alive. It's also likely that she would have written poems in support of immigrants today.

What would you like today's children to think about after they read your books? Is there anything they can do to ensure that immigrants to our country feel welcome and respected?

LG: I'd like children to think about what is important to them and how they can speak out for whatever it is. I hope children understand that there are many ways to speak out—not only with our spoken words, but also with our writing, our art, our actions, and our interactions. I also hope children will think



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about how it might feel to be an immigrant and how they would want to be treated if they were one.

I know that you've also published a children's novel with an immigration theme. What drives your passion for this topic? Do you have other ideas centered around immigration?

LG: Yes. My book *Bridge to America* does have an immigrant theme. I put a lot of heart and passion into that book as well. All four of my grandparents were immigrants. So I grew up feeling close to the

immigrant experience. I wanted to write a book that would help kids understand how it feels to be an immigrant. From the letters of appreciation that I receive from kids, teachers, and parents, I believe I succeeded. One teacher recently wrote me that *Bridge to America* is the best read aloud she's found on tolerance.

You have published so many different kinds of books. Do you have plans to write additional picture book biographies?

LG: Actually, I have written a couple others. I'm still looking for the right publisher.

How can readers learn more about you and your books?

LG: They can visit my website, www.lindaglaserauthor.com.

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Toni Buzzeo, MA, MLIS, is an author as well as a career library media specialist. She is the author of thirteen picture books, most recently Penelope Popper, Book Doctor (UpstartBooks, 2011) and many professional books and articles. Visit www.tonibuzzeo.com or e-mail Toni at tonibuzzeo@tonibuzzeo.com.

