



Artist Spotlight

C.B. Lilly: Writer

"I never set out to write youth fiction, but when the idea for *Blame it on Barbara* came to me I fell in love with it. When I was around the same age as the character in the book I remember feeling like people didn't take what I had to say seriously because I was "just a kid," and I vowed then to remember how that felt when I became an adult myself. And I think I've honored that promise, at least I hope I have.

"I'm not really sure when or why I decided I wanted to be a writer. In fact, I'm not sure it was something I decided at all; it was more something that just was. It's the one part of my life that I've never questioned. At times maybe I should have, but I honestly can't imagine doing anything else.

"Knowing what I wanted to do, however, and actually making it a reality are two vastly different things. When I first started out I was primarily focused on writing for film and television. After graduating from my tiny little high school in rural Pennsylvania, I moved all the way to Los Angeles and attended the USC film school with a major in screenwriting.

"After graduating from USC, I spent ten years on the west coast, and while I was constantly writing I never quite figured out how to make a living at it. A lot of my friends from the cinema program chose to go into other fields when they weren't able to find writing jobs, but I decided instead to try my hand at writing novels.

"The main characters in the book are kids, and it's about things I think kids will identify with and be interested in, but it's not "written for kids" in the sense that it's not written down to them. Are there words in the book that the average 10-year-old may not know? Sure. But that's how we learn, by reading new words and learning new things in the context of stories we're interested in."



Excerpt from *Blame it on Barbara*, by C.B. Lilly:

"Barbara finished her report with tales of double agents, classified government secrets, clandestine road trips, fake FBI agents, real CIA agents, cartoonish thugs, carnies who smelled like cat litter, and, of course, the ever elusive Calypso. She changed some things and left out a few details to protect the innocent, but she could never leave out the Calypso. It wasn't only her scariest moment, it was also her greatest."

There will be a First Friday book release party for *Blame it on Barbara* at 237 W. Chestnut St. Lancaster, on November 7 from 5 to 9 p.m. The author will be at the reception. For more information, contact: pizzanightpress@gmail.com.

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