July 23, 2015

Comment Submission regarding Notice of Inquiry on Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

Dear U.S. Copyright Office,

I have been a working professionally as illustrator, designer and author since I graduated from the University of Dayton with a BFA in Visual Communication Design in 1998. I am represented by Painted Words Agency and have over a dozen children's books published.

As my experience, business and body of work has grown, I have been successful in licensing my artwork across various categories, including greeting cards, gift wrap, stickers, puzzles, boards games, baby and toddler cups, fabric and books. A large portion of my livelihood depends on advances and royalties I collect from new product applications of existing artwork. My artwork does not lose its value upon publication—in fact, I have an agent that works to negotiate contracts that protect my rights to license my work across multiple categories. Everything I create becomes part of my business inventory—clients often browse through my portfolio of images to license existing work for new products. For example, artwork that I originally created for the book *Tons of Trucks* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) has later been licensed for fabric, greeting cards, wall decals and toddler cups. Illustrations originally commissioned by Papyrus for gift bags have also been licensed for pictures frames, albums, growth charts, wall decals, toddler cups, plush and fabric. Licensing is a regular and essential part of my income.

As a business owner and visual creator, my success, as well as my very existence, relies on my copyrights being clearly protected and enforced. I urge you to consider the detrimental impact that *The Next Great Copyright Act* could have on my ability to license and protect the value of my artwork. I should not be pressured to register my works with independent commercial registries that in turn gain access to my images—or else risk that my unregistered work could be labeled an "orphan". My rights need to remain clearly protected, with no loopholes or grey areas of interpretation—this is not an abstract legal issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue that is so very important to me and the entire artist community.

Respectfully,
Betsy Snyder McCormack