

# Author Spotlight with Leslie Bulion



**You were a medical social worker and a school social worker before becoming a full-time writer. How does your experience in these fields inform your writing today?**

All of my experiences—educational, work, travel, and interpersonal—filter through my writing to enrich every story I want to tell. Social workers are trained to listen closely to people and to pay particular attention to how they express their thoughts and feelings. As a school social worker, I was lucky to know so many students, all learning, growing, playing, and working at finding their place in the world. Although my characters are fictional, I hope my experiences in schools, as a child myself, and as a parent enrich my understanding of young people in general. I'm very much at home when I visit schools for author programs and workshops.

***Hey There, Stink Bug!* is a book of poems that describes the science of bug behavior. What gave you the idea to make this a book of poetry?**

Several summers ago, I took a weeklong entomology class called “The Way Bugs Work,” and I fell completely in love with bugs. The first thing I did was make the fourth-grade students in my novel, *The Trouble with Rules*, study bugs, too. But I kept thinking about how each kind of bug is this wonderful little evolutionary package, with ingenious ways to defend against predators, find (or attack!) food, and survive in a specific environment. Then I thought, “Hey . . . poems are wonderful little packages of expression. Wouldn't it be fun to put these two kinds of packages together? Hmm . . . maybe a haiku about a Japanese beetle. What else?”



**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

I think I was more focused on what I was actually doing at each stage of my youngster life than what I thought I might want to be at some later point. I know that when I was six, I wanted to be Julie Andrews. But I've always been interested in science. And I've been writing poetry for myself since my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Brownworth, encouraged me to try it.

**You studied oceanography in college. What was one of the coolest things you learned about the ocean?**

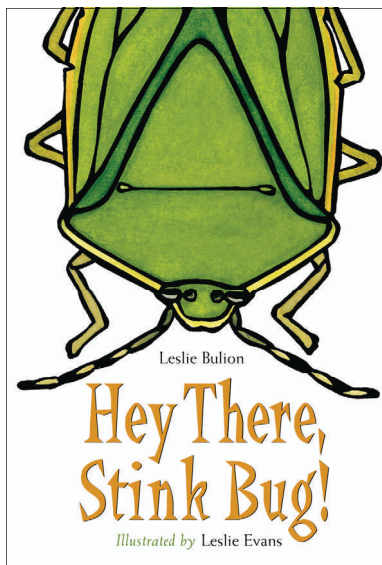
The ocean covers two-thirds of our planet, and encompasses ninety-five percent of our biosphere—the places on Earth where living things dwell. That watery biosphere is really many different habitats, filled with a tremendous diversity of life forms. Much of the ocean is thousands of feet deep, which was too deep to explore much until recently. Through the development of new technology, researchers are making exciting discoveries in the world oceans every day. How cool is that?

**What do you like to do when you're not writing?**

I read, I hike, and I scuba dive. I love to travel and take photographs (especially of scenery and bugs). I spend time with family and friends. I love musical theater. I like to make things, too, like homemade cards, and hand-knitted gifts. But when I'm lucky and my writing is really humming along, typing away on my computer is what I want to do most!

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Books by Leslie Bulion



ISBN: 978-1-58089-304-6 • HC • \$12.95  
ISBN: 978-1-58089-340-4 • PB • \$5.95  
Ages 6–9

Witty poems describe the devious and diabolical methods that allow insects to capture prey, trick predators, attract mates—and outlast other species. Accurate and detailed information accompanying each poem explains the science of the bug behaviors. Bright, eye-catching linoleum-cut illustrations capture each insect in action.

“This is a book that will make you say, ‘Wow, this is a book that can make learning fun!’”

—Esmé Raji Codell

“They’ll laugh, they’ll learn, and hopefully they won’t lose their lunch!”

—*School Library Journal*

“The poems . . . are entertaining, though occasionally a tad crude. Kids will love them.”

—*Science Books & Films*