

Jeffers didn't become an avid reader until he went to university, but sometimes he and his wife will notice that their apartment has gone very quiet and go in search of Harland. He will often be found in his room, "his nose in a book".

He likes the ones by Jeffers. On a recent visit to their Belfast relatives, Jeffers came across an old copy of *The Way Back Home*. "It's actually dedicated to my wife. And I read it for the first time in six or seven years. To him. And I was like, actually, this is not bad. This is a good book!"

He has no idea if his wife has read any of his work. He once overheard her talking to someone about *The Day The Crayons Quit*, around the time the book was celebrating its second anniversary at the top of the New York Times bestseller chart. She must have been whispering, because Jeffers lowers his voice to mimic her. "Two years! Well, I should probably read it, then, shouldn't I?"

Harland, meanwhile, who is expecting a sibling in the new year, has clearly got to grips with what his father does for a living. In spring, the family went to the Hay festival, where they shared a cottage with Neil Gaiman and his wife, Amanda Palmer. "Why are all these other children looking at my daddy?" Harland wondered. "After that," Jeffers says: "He started looking at me and saying, 'Oliver Jeffers?'" For a long while, he addressed his father as Oliver Jeffers Daddy. "So I think he gets it," Jeffers says.

On all his books, Jeffers's author photograph shows him as a child. In the past, he has described himself as his "own target audience". But on *Here We Are*, the cover photograph shows Jeffers holding Harland. In spirit, at least, they are co-authors. No wonder Jeffers found it "surreal" to read his latest title to Harland for the first time. If he wrote all his other books thinking of the child he was, he has written this one thinking of the child he has.

Retrieval

1) When did Jeffers start to read more ?

Words in context

2) Find and copy a word which means 'unbelievable'.

Inference

3) Does Harland understand what his father does for a living ? Use examples from the text to explain your answer.

4) How was writing *Here We Are* different to writing his other books ?