



# A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH HORATIO CLARE ABOUT HIS BOOK THE TERRIBLE YOOT

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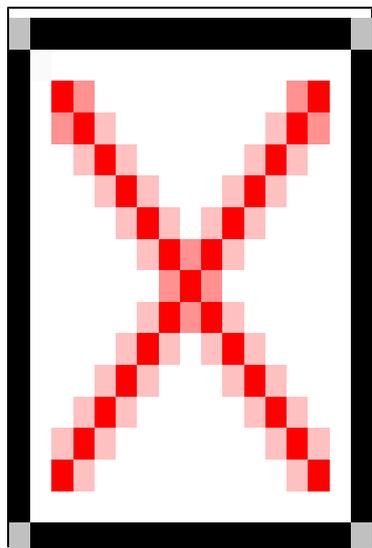
Article Author:

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Byline:

**Horatio Clare** answers questions about his first book for children, **Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot**.



Horatio Clare's first book **Running for the Hills**, an acclaimed account of a Welsh childhood, won a **Somerset Maugham Award**, was longlisted for the **Guardian First Book Award** and saw Horatio shortlisted for the **Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year**. His subsequent books included **Truant**, **A Single Swallow**, **The Prince's Pen** and most recently the travelogue **Down to the Sea in Ships**, shortlisted for the **Wales Book of the Year Award 2015**. [Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot](#) [3] is his first book for children.

*Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot* is your first children's book. What inspired you to write it?

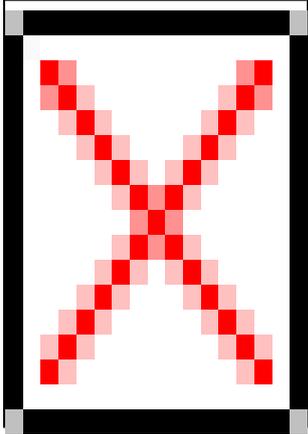
I wanted to write my way into moving to England from Italy, which I was hesitant about. So I had a very strong setting - the house where we now live. I wanted to say something to my son about depression - he was a couple of months old when I began, but his character was enormous and rambunctious, so I borrowed his name and something of his personality, and projected forward. And I wanted to write about nature for children, because it is THE great teacher, and a consolation, and a saviour ever.

*How do you find writing for children?*

I am absolutely lit up about writing for children. I feel there are no limits, their imaginations are so powerful and enormous, and I love being in dialogue with an imagined child reader. It is the most exciting writing I have yet discovered. I have an idea for the next book in the series - in fact I have started it....

*Your book deals with the difficult subject of depression. Do you feel that it's important to talk to children about this? Why did you choose to write about it in the way you have?*

My contact with children thus far has taught me that there is nothing you cannot talk to children about. Depression



seems a biproduct of the society we are raising them in: I wanted to address it because it is in my family, and it can kill. But there is also a dreadful, mordant sense of humour at work in depression - it is actually quite funny, the things you do and think when you have the blues. You rarely giggle at it, though.

*There are wonderful descriptions of the countryside in your book. Is nature particularly important to you?*

Nature is everything, it really is. Our life on this earth is only Life, and Nature is Life. The further we get from it the less happy and less truly productive we are, as a race, I think, anyway.

*What's your favourite scene in the book, and why?*

I really enjoyed the heron! And I like the clear, at the end, with the owl. The heron just made me laugh from the moment I thought of him.

*What children's books do you most remember from your own childhood?*

Impossible! We had so many books, and no TV, so they all made a huge impression, each was an adventure - cheesy-sounding, but true! I especially loved **Wild Lone, the Story of a Pytchley Fox**, by BB.

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