

Lois Lowry- In her own words

I've always felt that I was fortunate to have been born the middle child of three. My older sister, Helen, was very much like our mother: gentle, family-oriented, eager to please. Little brother Jon was the only boy and had interests that he shared with Dad; together they were always working on electric trains and erector sets; and later, when Jon was older, they always seemed to have their heads under the raised hood of a car. That left me in-between, and exactly where I wanted most to be: on my own. I was a solitary child who lived in the world of books and my own vivid imagination.

Because my father was a career military officer - an Army dentist - I lived all over the world. I was born (March 20, 1937) in Hawaii, and moved from there to New York, where I began school. When the war began, Dad had to go overseas, and Mother took us back to the town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where she had grown up and where my grandparents lived. I finished elementary school there and during the summer following sixth grade we moved to Tokyo, where I went through seventh and eighth grades. I graduated from high school in New York City, but by the time I went to college, Brown University in Rhode Island, my family was living in Washington, D.C.

I married young. I had just turned nineteen - just finished my sophomore year in college - when I married a Naval officer and continued the odyssey that military life requires. California. Connecticut (a daughter born there).



Florida (a son). South Carolina. Finally Cambridge, Massachusetts, when my husband left the service and entered Harvard Law School (another daughter; another son) and then to Maine - by now with four children under the age of five in tow.

My children grew up in Maine. So did I. I returned to college at the University of Southern Maine, got my degree, went to graduate school, and finally began to write professionally, the thing I had dreamed of doing since those childhood years when I had endlessly scribbled stories and poems in notebooks.

After my marriage ended in 1977, when I was forty, I met Martin and we spent thirty happy years together, traveling the world but equally happy just sitting on the porch with the New York Times crossword puzzle! Sadly,



Martin died in the spring of 2011. Today I am in Cambridge, Massachusetts, living alone and writing in a house dominated by a very shaggy Tibetan Terrier named Alfie and a funny little cat named Lulu. But a very happy part of my time is spent as well in Maine, in a 1768 farmhouse surrounded by meadows and flower gardens, and often with visiting grandchildren.

My books have varied in content and style. Yet it seems that all of them deal, essentially, with the same general theme: the importance of human connections. *A Summer*

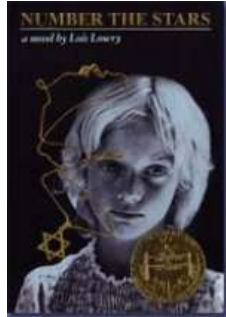


to Die, my first book, was a highly fictionalized retelling of the early death of my sister, and of the effect of such a loss on a family. *Number the Stars*, set in a different culture and era during the Holocaust, tells the same story: that of the role that we humans play in the lives of our fellow beings.

The Giver - and the two books that follow it and make a trilogy (soon to be a quartet! I've just finished the fourth book, *Son!*), *Gathering Blue* and *Messenger* - take place against the background of very different cultures and times. Though they are broader in scope than my earlier books, they nonetheless speak to the same concern: the vital need of people to be aware of their interdependence, not only with each other, but with the world and its environment.

My older son was a fighter pilot in the United States Air Force. His death in the cockpit of a warplane left a little girl fatherless and tore away a piece of my world. But it left me, too, with a wish to honor him by joining the many others trying to find a way to end conflict on this very fragile earth.

I am a grandmother now. For my own grandchildren - and for all those of their generation - I try, through writing, to convey my passionate awareness that we live intertwined on this planet and that our future depends upon our caring more, and doing more, for one another.



Think about it!

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete sentences.



1. How were Lois Lowry's interests different from her brother's growing up?
2. Some might describe Lois Lowry as an "army brat". What does this mean based on her description of her childhood?
3. How many children did Lois Lowry give birth to? How many boys/girls?
4. What does Lois Lowry mean when she says, "My children grew up in Maine. So did I."?
5. How does Lois Lowry spend her time today?
6. What is her book *A Summer to Die* loosely based on?
7. What genre of fiction does *Number the Stars* fit into? Why?
8. *The Giver* is the first of how many companion books?
9. What happened to Lois Lowry's eldest son? How did this change her world view?
10. What is the theme found in all of Lowry's books? Cite specific information from the reading that supports your findings.

Learn more about Lois Lowry at
<http://www.loislowry.com/>