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A children's book was born out of one military family's love and tragedy.

Walter Ryce Mar 21, 2019



Javier Lopez (left) and Don Rose have completed the manuscript for the follow-up to their first children's book.

Nic Coury

Army veteran Don Rose used to make up meandering stories wrapped around a moral message for his four children at bedtime. His wife suggested he write them down for posterity, so he did.

Tragically, years later, his daughter Madison was killed in a car accident at the age of 25.

The grief inspired Rose's son-in-law, Javier Lopez, a former Marine, to write a poem about her that touched Rose deeply. He later asked Lopez if he writes poetry. He did. So they decided to create a children's book, just for the family, comprising Rose's short stories and Lopez's poetry.

Then someone suggested they send them to a publisher. They sent their collection to Mascot Books, and Mascot Books responded that they had never received a book manuscript quite like it.

When the Day Ends... and Dreams Begin is made up of 16 of Rose's stories and 21 of Lopez's poems.

"Javier is a very interesting guy," Rose says. "He's an East L.A. tough guy, with tattoos, and he's got the sweetest heart."

Lopez shows two sides of a narrative in his poems. In one of them, a man is trying to swat at a fly; then it switches perspective to the fly, which thinks the man is trying to play with it.

Two of the more popular characters have been Rocky the Rock who lived off the coast of Carmel, and Uncle Frank, based on Rose's own dog.

The creation of the book crossed many miles: Rose lives in Carmel, Lopez lives in Brentwood, the publisher is in Virginia, and the artist is in Brazil.

"That's the publishing world," Rose says.

They come together in Carmel this weekend for a book-signing.

DON ROSE and JAVIER LOPEZ read and sign 1-3pm Sunday, March 24, at River House Books, 208 Crossroads Shopping Center, Carmel. Free. 626-2665, roselopezbooks.com

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