“If I waited for inspiration, I’d still be waiting. I have to force myself to write—at least at first—and try to come up with ideas. The most important thing to me is my routine. I keep at it, day after day, taking small steps. After a while I become excited about what I’m writing, and then can’t wait to get back to it.” —Louis Sachar

Louis Sachar’s book *Holes*, winner of the 1999 Newbery Medal, the National Book Award, and the *Boston Globe–Horn Book* Award, is also an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, an ALA Quick Pick, an ALA Notable Book, and was made into a major motion picture. *Small Steps*, the follow-up to *Holes* was released in January 2006.
I'm sitting in my office, which is located over the garage of my house in Austin, Texas. My dogs, Lucky and Tippy, are here with me. They are the only people allowed in my office when I'm writing. Lucky seems to understand that. He growls at my wife or my daughter if they try to enter. Maybe he senses me growling on the inside. I don't like being interrupted. Writing is a kind of self-hypnosis. Interruptions break the spell, and it's sometimes hard to get back.

I generally write for about two hours a day, the first thing every morning. After two hours, I find myself losing energy and concentration. It's best to quit while I'm still excited about the story. Then it will be easier to get started tomorrow.

I couldn't write for a longer period, even if I wanted. Tippy has learned my schedule. After two hours, she taps me with her paw, barks, howls, and otherwise lets me know it's time for her walk.

I never talk about a book until it is finished. I do this for a variety of reasons, but mainly motivation. By not allowing myself to talk about it, the only way I can let it out, is to finish writing it.

I write five or six drafts of each book. I start with a small idea, and it grows as I write. My ideas come to me while I'm writing. The story changes greatly during the first few drafts. By the time a book is finished, it is impossible for me to say how I got the various ideas.

I was born March 20, 1954, in East Meadow, New York. My father worked on the 78th floor of the Empire State Building. When I was nine, we moved to Tustin, California.

I went to college at the University of California, at Berkeley. During my last year there, I helped out at an elementary school—Hillside School. It was my experience there that led to my first book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*, which I wrote in 1976.

I attended Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and graduated in 1980. I worked part-time as a lawyer for eight years as I continued to write children's books.

My wife's name is Carla. When I first met her, she was a counselor at an elementary school. She was the inspiration behind the counselor in *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. We were married in 1985. Our daughter, Sherre, was born in 1987. She was four years old when I started writing the *Marvin Redpost* series. That's why Marvin has a four-year-old sister.

In my spare time, I like to play bridge and tennis. I'm a much better bridge player than tennis player. The other evening, I played tennis with a teacher. She clobbered me. When I found out she was a fourth-grade teacher, I told her who I was. She was very impressed. She couldn't wait to tell her class she had killed Louis Sachar playing tennis!

One thing I always want to know about my favorite authors is who their favorite authors are, so I will end with that. My list includes Margaret Atwood, E. L. Doctorow, J. D. Salinger, Kurt Vonnegut, Kazuo Ishiguro, Flannery O'Connor, Rex Stout, Katherine Patterson, and E. B. White.

(Tippy is beginning to whine. Now she's tapping my leg...
Praise

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