

Web resources for *Ubi Fera Sunt* • Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*

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Mauritiō Sendaciō, Magistrō Fābulārum et Pictūrārum

—For Maurice Sendak, Master of Stories and Pictures—

Why (Not) a Latin *Wild Things*?

When Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* was first published in 1963, it became a classic almost overnight, selling more than 20 million copies to date and inspiring the creation of a host of offspring, including children's toys, dolls, and puppets; board and video games; a 1980s children's opera, coscripted by Sendak himself, as well as other musical compositions; and the much-praised 2009 feature film adaptation, directed by Spike Jonze. The book has earned countless recognitions, including the 1964 Randolph Caldecott Medal for "the most distinguished American picture book for children"; in 2015, a half century later, it was ranked first in *TIME* magazine's list "The 100 Best Children's Books of All Time" (though truly the book's appeal extends all the way to us senior citizens!). It has been translated into numerous other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, and even Finnish (www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnIDJMC3Nyg), but never until now into classical Latin.

In an oft-related anecdote, Sendak, who passed away May 8, 2012, at age 83, once wrote of a young

admirer: "A little boy sent me a charming card with a little drawing on it. I loved it. I answer all my children's letters—sometimes very hastily—but this one I lingered over. I sent him a card and I drew a picture of a Wild Thing on it. I wrote, 'Dear Jim: I loved your card.' Then I got a letter back from his mother and she said: 'Jim loved your card so much he ate it.' That to me was one of the highest compliments I've ever received. He didn't care that it was an original Maurice Sendak drawing or anything. He saw it, he loved it, he ate it." With a passion akin to that young fan's, I must confess: *libellum vīdī, amāvī, trānstulī*, "I saw the little book, I loved it, I translated it." I hope that Mr. Sendak would have considered this modest Latin rendering of his perpetually charming classic to be also a "high compliment," as it is most certainly intended, and also that lovers of what I affectionately dub "The Mother Tongue" will cherish this volume just as so many readers have enjoyed the Latin versions of such other children's classics as *Winnie Ille Pu* (*Winnie the Pooh*), *Cattus Petasatus* (*The Cat in the Hat*), and *Alicia in Terra Mirabili* (*Alice in Wonderland*).