





From the colophon: regarding making the illustrations for this book, the artist David Small writes: *It was during the pandemic. Work was scarce, the future uncertain and, finding myself in the vestibule of old age, I recalled Eliot's famous lines: "I grow old, I grow old, I shall wear my trousers rolled." Rereading the poem after several decades I found it relevant to me in fresh ways. It's wry humor, for one thing, was revelatory. (I hadn't sensed it so acutely before, when I was young and unfamiliar as yet with the circumstances.) Dark humor is perhaps the best way to cope with the diminishment of midlife and what lies beyond. The poem is, in fact, so accurate an expression of the plights of certain men in middle age, it astounds me that Eliot was only 28 at its conception. Illustrating this, which I think is among his best and certainly most accessible poems, gave me great pleasure.*

**David Small** is an award-winning writer and illustrator and among the most renowned children's book illustrators in America. He was awarded the Caldecott Medal (*So You Want to Be President?*, 2001), two Caldecott Honors (*The Gardener*, 1998; *One Cool Friend*, 2012), National Book Award Finalist (*Stitches*, 2009 and *The Underneath*, 2008), and received numerous other prizes, accolades, and honors. Prior to illustrating Eliot's poem, he wrote and or illustrated more than 50 titles, including seven books with his wife, the writer Sarah Stewart. Among his most admired illustrated works are *Imogene Antlers* (1985), *Once Upon a Banana* (2006), and *Fenwick's Suit* (1996).

