

# Current Issues in North American and Cultural Studies | Lecture Series of the North American Studies Program

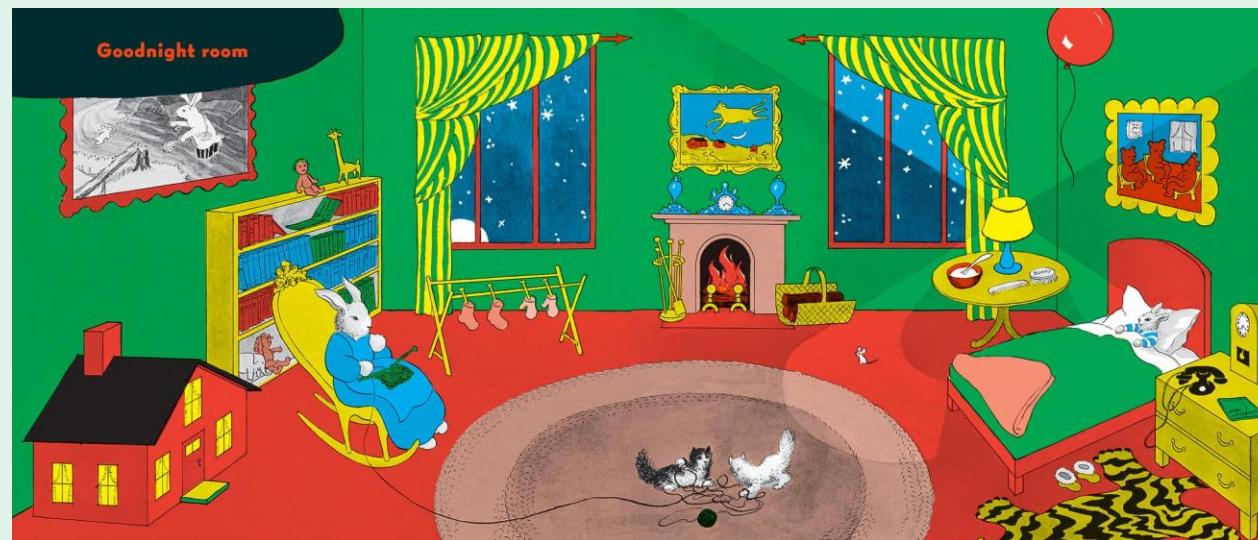
**Dr. Sarah Pyke**

University of Münster

## Getting It Past the Adults: Children's Books and Queer Kinship in Mid-Twentieth Century America

Tuesday | 3 June 2025 | 6:00 c.t.-8:00 pm  
53111 Bonn | Rabinstraße 8 | Room 7

This lecture lays out how queer sensibilities have shaped some of the most beloved children's literature of the mid-twentieth century. Dr. Pyke's talk recalls visionary editor Ursula Nordstrom who, as Harper & Row children's books director from 1940 to 1973, nurtured a network of author-illustrators. Among them were Margaret Wise Brown, Maurice Sendak, and Arnold Lobel, all now recognised as bisexual, gay, or lesbian. As groups such as Moms for Liberty call for children's books by and about LGBTQ+ people to be censored and banned, Dr. Pyke offers an alternative history of American children's literature and its queer intimacies.



Double-page spread from Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* (1947, illustrated by Clement Hurd).

**Dr. Sarah Pyke** teaches children's and Young Adult literature at the University of Münster. She is a co-founder of the Banned Books Network Münster, a former Munby Fellow in Bibliography at Cambridge University Library and currently working on a group biography, entitled "Former Children: The Queer Creators of Mid-Century American Children's Books."