

KATE MCBRIDE

# Tales of Two Worlds

ARNIE & SOOT NAVIGATE FLORENCE

Two fluffy cats live under a bridge in the center of Florence. Curious and kind, Arnie and Soot navigate the city through secret underground passages. Gourmet taste and insatiable curiosity lead these library lovers to discover famous and unknown places from a cat's point of view. Where does their "hole with a view" under the Ponte alle Grazie lead to? What adventures await them? Arnie and Soot invite you to come along!

History, recipes and maps.



Illustrations by Ashley O'Mara

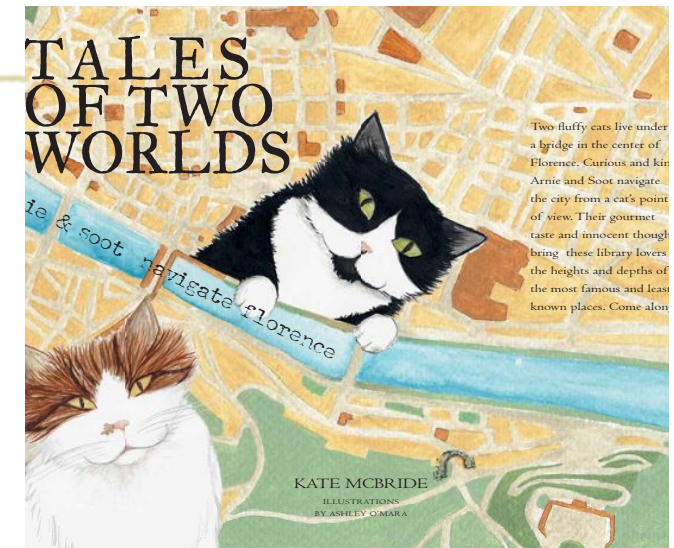
110 colour, 50 B&W

Photographs by Madison O'Mara & James O'Mara

Polaroids by Kate McBride

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Two fluffy cats live under a bridge in the center of Florence. Curious and kind, Arnie and Soot navigate the city from a cat's point of view. Their gourmet taste and innocent thoughts bring these library lovers the heights and depths of the most famous and least known places. Come along!

Illustrator **Ashley O'Mara** (Kate's daughter) lives with her two cats Tinkle and Puss Puss in Vancouver, Canada. A self-taught artist, Ashley enjoys painting animals, nature and cupcakes. Along with illustrating children's books, she has done album cover art and many pet portraits.

Her work can be viewed on her website [ashleycakes.ca](http://ashleycakes.ca)

**James O'Mara** (Kate's husband) is a photographer and designer and his work may be viewed on [jamesomara.com](http://jamesomara.com)

**Madison O'Mara** (Kate's other daughter) lives and works as a dancer in Paris, France.

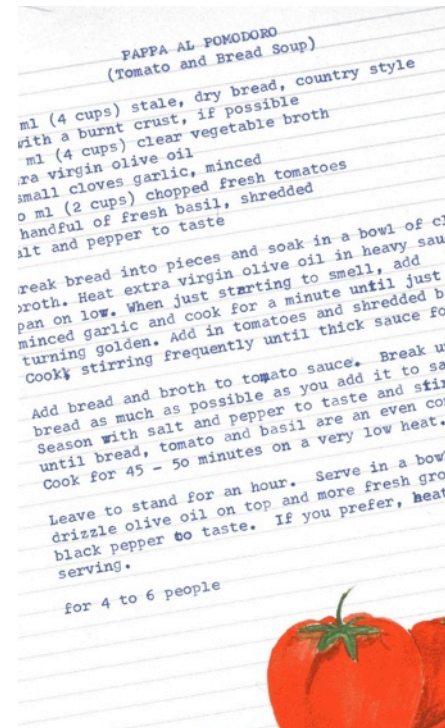
**Kate McBride** loves cats and loves Florence. When she's not dreaming up bedtime stories about Arnie and Soot, she writes for travel and wine clients and works in music and film. Her other books include *Poems & Polaroids: I Journey With You Here* and *A Concordance to the Complete Poems of E.E. Cummings*.



# Kate McBride Tales of Two Worlds



## Preface



What do they know of Florence, that only Florence know? Quite a lot, it turns out, if you're a cat. In Florence, cats do not walk alone, and all places are not alike – not in the least! A cat in Florence can rub against the marble toes of Michelangelo's David in the piazza della Signoria, chase its tail in the shadow of Brunelleschi's Dome or warm its tummy on the stone benches of Palazzo Strozzi. Like a child's, a cat's world is lived close to the ground. It is a world of legs and knees to avoid, steps to climb and places just out of reach. It is a world of narrow passages, hidden treasures and secret gardens full of mysterious fragrances.

The river Arno cuts the city in two, only to be stitched together again by its many bridges. A cat's world moves forward in bursts of frenetic play, endless hunts and long periods of repose, eyes barely open to watch the Arno flowing lazily underneath the Ponte Vecchio. Like a child's, a cat's world is magical, and every city landmark has special hidden meaning. An ancient olive tree hides a forked branch where a cat can sit unobserved for hours. Sober colonnades allow a cat to follow an unsuspecting monk the whole length of an ancient frescoed cloister without once being seen. Even the Uffizi, invested daily by swarms of tourists, has its overground passages and its underground tunnels, its secret paths above, below and along the river. This book is an invitation to share a cat's world, and to discover Florence through a cat's eyes. For a cat, Florence is an immovable feast.

Dr. James Bradburne

Director General,  
Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi

Coming Up:  
*Arnie & Soot's Adventures in Paris*

