Raymond Cruz was born in New York City, grew up in Spanish Harlem and began drawing at age five. After studying at the High School of Art and Design in New York City and at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Cruz graduated from Cooper Union, majoring in fine and graphic arts. He worked in many areas of art and design, including textile and wallpaper design, and he created advertising illustrations, fashion illustrations, and cosmetic package designs for New York City advertising agencies.

Ray Cruz 1933-1988

As a children's book illustrator, Ray found remarkable success. He illustrated more than twenty books, none more popular than *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, the story of a crabby little boy who has a series of misadventures. The success of the original Alexander book inspired several sequels, all illustrated by Cruz. He lived his whole life in what he called “MY New York City.”

“Ray was a brilliant illustrator, best known for the “Alexander” series of children’s books. Millions of children around the world know his work, and have learned life lessons from recognizing their own emotions in the characters he brought to life. He lives on through his significant body of work and the joy he has brought to so many, including me.” -- Stephanie Wolf