A truly unique and multi-faceted artist, Shel Silverstein was a renowned poet, playwright, illustrator, screenwriter, and songwriter. Best known for his immensely popular children's books including The Giving Tree, Falling Up, and A Light in the Attic, Silverstein has delighted tens of millions of readers around the world, becoming one of the most popular and best-loved children's authors of all time.

Born in Chicago on September 25, 1930, Sheldon Allan Silverstein grew up to attain an enormous public following, but always preferred to say little about himself. "When I was a kid," he told Publishers Weekly in 1975, "I would much rather have been a good baseball player or a hit with the girls. But I couldn't play ball. I couldn't dance. So I started to draw and to write. I was lucky that I didn't have anyone to copy, be impressed by. I had developed my own style."

Silverstein drew his first cartoons for the adult readers of Pacific Stars and Stripes when he was a G.I. in Japan and Korea in the 1950’s. He also learned to play the guitar and to write songs, a talent that would later produce such hits as "A Boy Named Sue" for Johnny Cash and “The Cover of the Rolling Stone” for Dr. Hook.

Shel Silverstein never planned on writing for children – surprising for an artist whose children's works would soon become available in more than 30 languages around the world. In the early 1960's Tomi Ungerer, a friend whose own career in children's books was blossoming, introduced Silverstein to his editor, Harper Collins' legendary Ursula Nordstrom. That connection led to the publication of The Giving Tree in 1964. The book sold modestly at first, but soon the gentle parable about a boy and the tree that loved him was admired by readers of all ages, recommended by counselors and teachers, and being read aloud from pulpits. Decades after its initial publication, with more than five and a half million copies sold, The Giving Tree holds a permanent spot atop lists of perennial bestsellers.

Where the Sidewalk Ends, Shel Silverstein's first collection of poems, was published in 1974 and was hailed as an instant classic. Its poems and drawings were applauded for their zany wit, irreverent wisdom, and tender heart. Two more collections followed: A Light in the Attic in 1981, and Falling Up in 1996. Both books dominated bestseller lists for months, with A Light in the Attic shattering all previous records for its 182-week stay on the New York Times list. His poetry books are widely used in schools as a child's first introduction to poetry.

Silverstein enjoyed a long, successful career as a songwriter with credits that included the popular "Unicorn Song" for the Irish Rovers and "I'm Checking Out" written for the film Postcards from the Edge and nominated for an Academy Award in 1991. In 1984, Silverstein won a Grammy Award for Best Children's Album for Where the Sidewalk Ends – "recited, sung and shouted" by the author. He performed his own songs on a number of albums and wrote others for friends, including 1998's Old Dogs with country stars Waylon Jennings, Mel Tillis, Bobby Bare, and Jerry Reed; and his last children's recording Underwater Land with singer/songwriter and longtime friend Pat Dailey.

Shel Silverstein loved to spend time in Greenwich Village, Key West, Martha's Vineyard, and Sausalito, California. Up until his death in May 1999, he continued to create plays, songs, poems, stories, and drawings, and most importantly, in Shel's own words, "have a good time."

Those good times show in the charm and humor of Underwater Land. Its seventeen tracks are a perfect blend of Silverstein's irreverent wit and Dailey's inviting vocal style. Produced by Silverstein, and featuring his whimsical artwork, the CD is now available from Olympia Records.