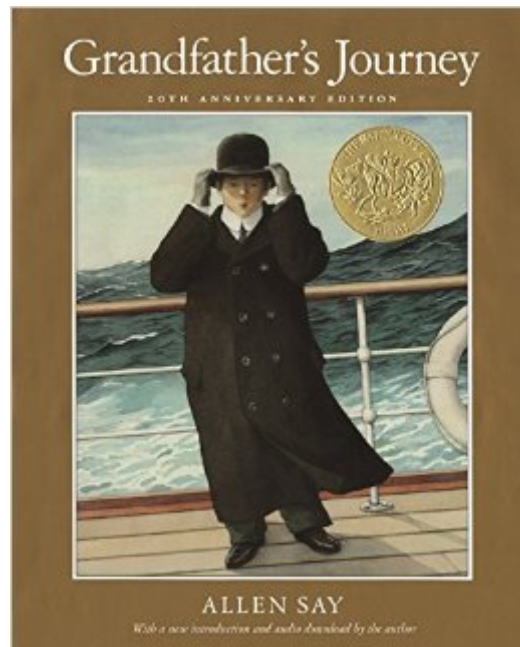


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# Grandfather's Journey



## Synopsis

When he was a young man, Allen Say's grandfather left his home in Japan to explore the world. He began his journey by crossing the Pacific Ocean on a steamship, then wandered the deserts, farmlands, and cities of North America. Allen Say lovingly tells the story of his own family's cross-cultural history in elegant watercolor paintings that earned him a Caldecott Medal in 1994. This twentieth-anniversary gift edition of the modern classic features downloadable audio and a new introduction by Allen Say.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 650 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Anv edition (November 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544050509

ISBN-13: 978-0544050501

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 9.2 x 11.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (106 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #627,006 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in Books > Children's Books

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Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #288 in Books >

Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Cultural Studies > Customs, Traditions, Anthropology

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

I was curious about GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY because our local library had several copies on the shelf, and I always enjoy discovering what makes a book an award winner. Mr. Say's book won the 1994 Caldecott Medal, the same year Lois Lowry received the Newbery for her book, THE GIVER. It's an understatement to say this is one of the most beautiful children's books ever written. Mr. Say gently describes his grandfather's youthful journey from Japan to America. On his three-week steamship voyage, he is astonished by the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. After embarking, he explores by train the western landscapes of enormous rock formations and endless farm fields. During his travels, he meets people of different color, certainly a new sight for him. Say

writes, "The more he traveled, the more he longed to see new places..." Eventually, his grandfather settles along the coast of California after briefly returning to Japan to marry his childhood sweetheart. The couple have a daughter, whom we later learn is Say's mother, the subject of another stunning picture book, *TEA WITH MILK*. In time, the grandfather begins to miss Japan, and he decides to return to his homeland, along with his wife and grown daughter. Say's watercolor artistry is fantastic, as his skilled brush gracefully ages each character in the book. As a parent, I imagined my own children growing up, and realized how brief is the time we call childhood. The story continues, with the grandfather's heart truly in two places, America and Japan. Anyone who has ever traveled abroad can relate to this experience. As I read his book, I wept, because I too have lived in Japan, and part of my heart will always remain overseas.

Allen Say's autobiographical *Grandfather's Journey's* beautiful illustrations won the Caldecott Medal, but that is only half the reason to recommend this book. This story is about a Japanese man struggling over what his home is--the United States or Japan. When he is almost an adult, a young man (who would be Say's grandfather) moves to North America. He travels all over the United States (depicted in the illustrations) and falls in love with San Francisco. He briefly returns to Japan for his childhood love, then returns to San Francisco. Together they have a daughter and are living happily, but the grandfather becomes homesick for the mountain, rivers and friends of Japan. We see him surrounded by his songbirds in American clothes wishing for his home. Finally, when his daughter is almost grown, he returns to Japan. He laughs with his friends in his home village and for a time is happy. But his daughter had spent all her life in San Francisco and was not meant for the small village, so her father buys her a house in a city. She marries an untraditional man and has a son. But the father wishes for San Francisco. We see, as his grandson saw, him surrounded by songbirds and the things he loves, dressed in the traditional Japanese dress, wishing for his home in San Francisco. He plans to return to North America. Unfortunately, World War II begins and destroys the city. Grandfather returns to the small village, but never had another songbird. He told his grandson (who is the author and illustrator, Allen Say) that he wished to return to San Francisco one more time. But he died before he had the chance. When his grandson was nearly an adult, he went to America himself to see what his grandfather had talked about.

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