

Grandfather's Journey

written and illustrated by Allen Say

Allen Say was born in Yokohama, Japan, in 1937. He dreamed of becoming a cartoonist from the age of six, and, at age twelve, apprenticed himself to his favorite cartoonist, Noro Shinpei. For the next four years, Say learned to draw and paint under the direction of Noro, who has remained Say's mentor. Allen Say moved to the United States when he was sixteen. He illustrated his first children's book in 1972, while working in a photo studio. Say is a full-time writer and illustrator living in Portland, Oregon.

THE BOY OF THE THREE-YEAR NAP (1987 Caldecott Honor Medal)

GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY (1994 Caldecott Medal)

Introduce yourself. What is your first reaction to the story?

Discussion Questions:

The idea of "home" can mean different things to different people. What makes a place a home?

Would you say that the author is at home in two worlds or at home in neither? Why?

The author mentions songbirds three times in this short story. Why?

What do you think the author is saying about the power of travel?

What do you think of Grandfather's decision to move his family back to Japan?

Why does the author believe that he knows his grandfather now?

Where would you expect the author to spend his old age? Why?

What do you/would you tell your grandchildren about your experience of moving to another country?

Read the following sentence: "Bombs fell from the sky and scattered our lives like leaves in a storm." The author is comparing lives to leaves. This is a simile. What is the image that this sentence creates for you? What are the author's feelings about the war?

What is your impression of the illustrations in *Grandfather's Journey*?

Additional questions if time permits:

What causes people to leave their countries and their homes? What made your or your family decide to come to America?

What did you bring with you?

What were some of the first things you saw?

What was the most difficult thing for you when you first came to the United States?

What do you miss about your homeland?

What do you appreciate most about this country?