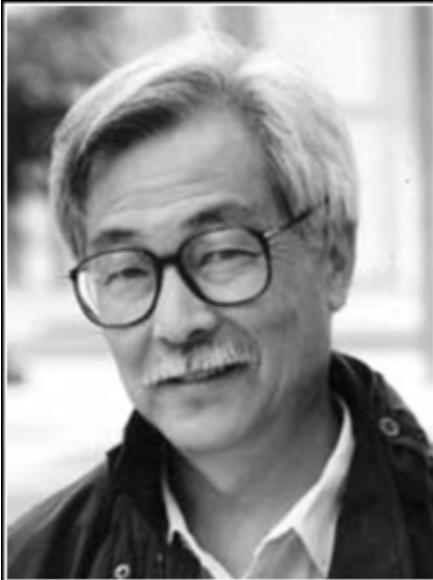


ALLEN SAY

2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award Illustrator Dossier



Most people seem to be interested
in turning their dreams into reality.
Then there are those who turn
reality into dreams. I belong to the
latter group.

— *Allen Say* —

AZ QUOTES

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Biography

Allen Say, perhaps best known for his 1994 **Caldecott Medal**-winning *Grandfather's Journey*, is lauded for his watercolor paintings; among his many books, only one, *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice*, forgoes artwork, even as it tells the story of his early artistic training. With *Drawing From Memory* and its follow-up *The Inker's Shadow*, Say reworks that unillustrated autobiographical middle-grade novel into a transporting hybrid of picture book and graphic memoir, intimately illuminating his journey as an artist as a young man.

The son of an ethnic Korean father raised in Shanghai by adoptive British parents, and a Japanese American mother from Oakland, California who moved to Japan, Say was born in pre-World War II Yokohama, Japan. The precocious Say decided early on to become a cartoonist: "When I was drawing, I was happy. I didn't need toys or friends or parents." Yet he quickly learns to hide his art, particularly from his mostly absent and disapproving father. By the end of World War II, "everything was broken," including Say's scattered family. Following an unusual deal with his grandmother – he gets an apartment in exchange for gaining admission to a prestigious Tokyo middle school – Say moves into a room of his own just before his 13th birthday, determined to become an artist. Inspired by a newspaper article about a boy who walked 350 miles to apprentice himself to the renowned cartoonist Noro Shinpei, Say likewise walks through the famous artist's studio door. Say's training with Noro-Sensei, whom Say lovingly refers to as his "spiritual father," lasts for several years, until Say emigrates to the United States.

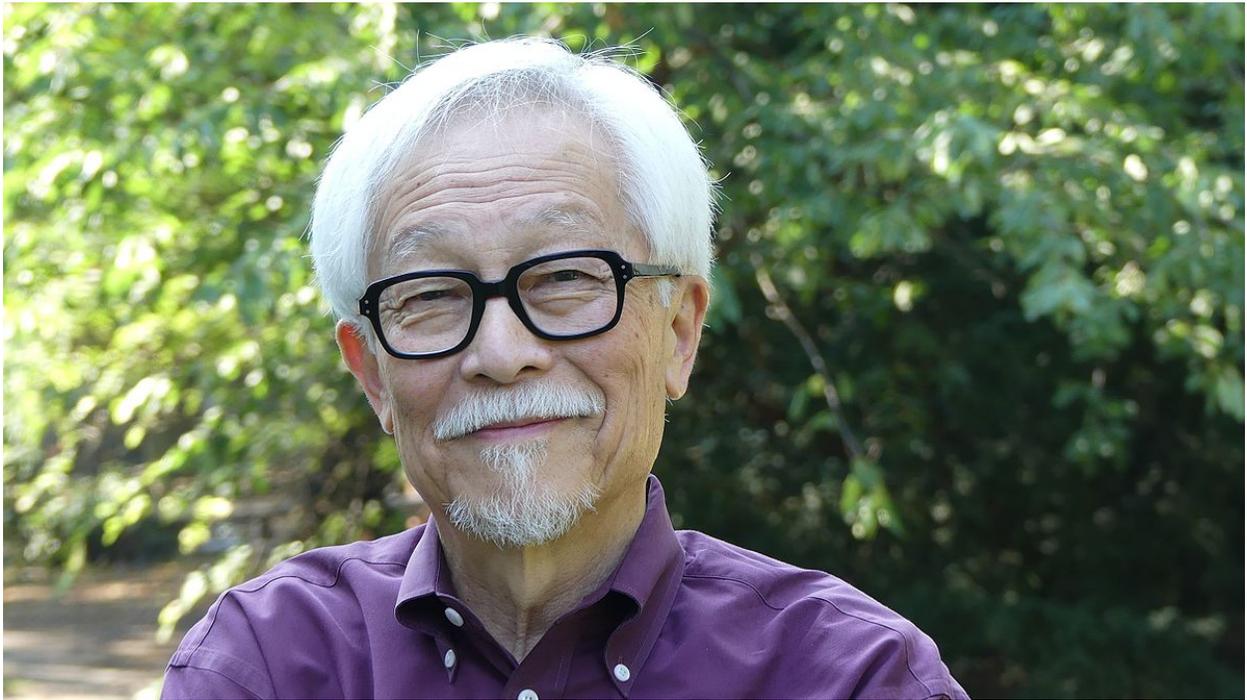
At just 15, Say "decided to go to America and make a name for [him]self." He landed via ship in the summer of 1953 in southern California with just a cardboard suitcase and a paint box from his beloved Noro-Sensei. Although Say traveled across the oceans from Japan with his family's new family, his father is all too eager to say good-bye to his only son: the teenager is unceremoniously handed over in the care of an American friend Bill with just \$10 and the admonishment, "Don't disgrace me in America." Under Bill's tutelage, Say entered the Harding Military Academy in Glendora, California. While his fellow students, "were friendly and very curious about a new arrival from their former enemy country," Say's only reliable companion was his "comic shadow" Kyusuke, a mischievous character created by Sensei, who enjoyed an envious life of endless freedom. When he's ejected from the Academy, Say's peripatetic, self-sufficient adventures land him in a tiny town where he's befriended by the high school principal who calls him "son," who guides him to a job and indirectly back to his art. The continued kindness of strangers sustains and nourishes him until he's ready to leave again, this time heading north to the city of his mother's birth. His journey as an artist is well underway, with stopovers to study architecture at the University of California at Berkeley, serve in the U.S. and eventually find a career in advertising and commercial photography. Over more than half a century, through the dozens of the books he creates and illustrates, Say has become one of the most beloved, most renowned children's book makers in the world.

Exhibitions of Say's works include the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Massachusetts, and most recently, the Multnomah County Library in his adopted hometown of Portland, Oregon.

Portrait photograph

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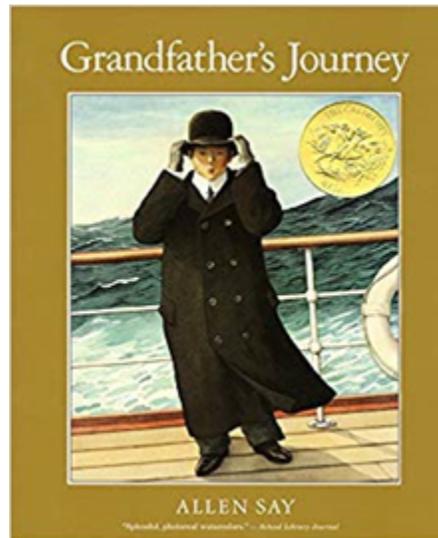
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allen_Say#/media/File:Allen_Say_at_16th_international_literature_festival_berlin_on_September_12,_2016.jpg



Contribution to Literature for Young People

Every picture I paint comes from something I have seen or imagined; the same is true with writing. So everything I paint or write is essentially autobiographical.

—Allen Say



Allen Say is the prolific and beloved illustrator of many picture books for young people, several of which are derived from his own experiences as a child through adulthood as he has lived his life between the cultures of Japan and United States. His masterful watercolor illustrations are like exquisite paintings and a photo-like realism that are breathtaking.

His contribution to children's literature began when Walter Lorraine, an editor at Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company approached Say about illustrating *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap*, which was published in 1988 and is a retelling of an old Japanese folktale. Illustrating that book changed Say's life when it won a Caldecott Honor Award and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. From that time forward Say has dedicated himself to writing and illustrating award-winning books for children.



Say is perhaps best known for his 1994 Caldecott Medal-winning *Grandfather's Journey*, which applauded his watercolor paintings that explored three generations of his family's moves between Japan and the US.

"In lucid, graceful language, he chronicles these passages, reflecting his love of both countries—plus the expatriate's ever-present longing for home—in both simple text and exquisitely composed watercolors: scenes of his grandfather discovering his new country and returning with new appreciation to the old, and pensive portraits recalling family photos, including two evoking the war and its aftermath. Lovely, quiet—with a tenderness and warmth new to this fine illustrators work." —Kirkus Reviews

In Allen Say's Caldecott acceptance speech, he said, "It is essentially a dream book, for the life's journey is an endless dreaming of the places we have left behind and the places we have yet to reach."



From an interview with Reading Rockets, Say commented that he believes his painting is a form of writing, that each brushstroke is a means of expression. He states, "*Writing, above all, is to make you see.*" His illustrations truly tell the story in each of his books. He has stated that some of his best ideas could only come to him through picture, not words.

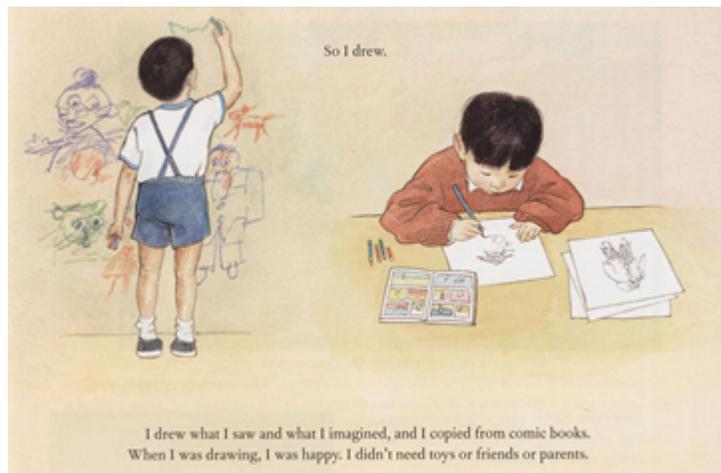
You react physically to a work of art. When you break out in goose pimples, then you know you have something.

—Allen Say

In all his books, the illustrations are beautifully composed and detailed. His watercolors are like telling a story where no words are needed. Kate O'Sullivan, Say's editor of his book *The Boy in the Garden*, praises his art by saying, "It goes without saying that Allen's art, the luminous, almost photographic quality of his compositions, makes his books instantly recognizable and beloved. The attention to detail, the play of light, the way that the pieces become windows to the stories ... I think readers feel they can step right in. You can hear them. His books are very personal, and so beautiful to look at. They're wonderful"

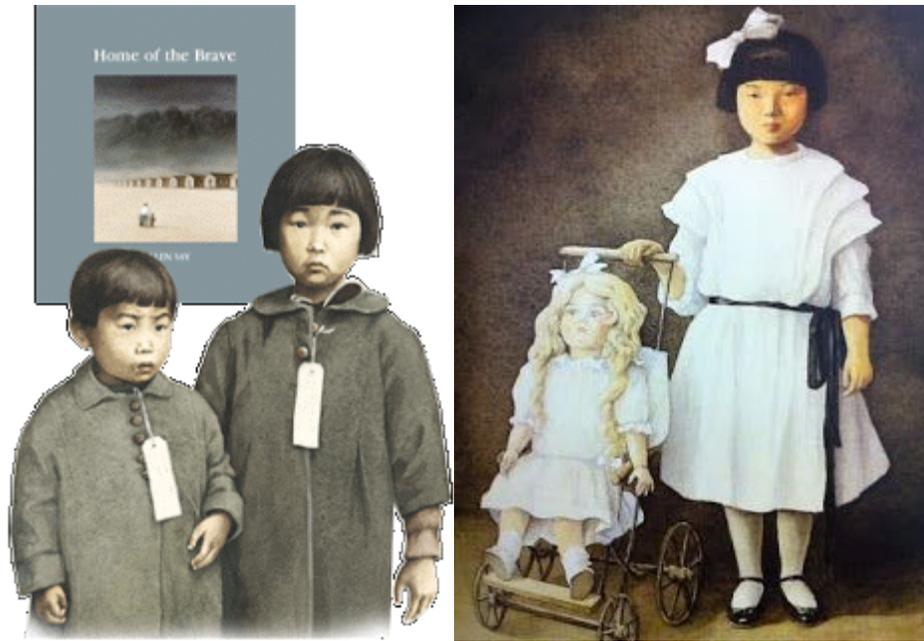


Allen Say has also depicted his own life through two memoirs, the first being *Drawing From Memory* and the second one that follows through with his life as a teen and beyond in *The Inker's Shadow*. Through his melding of paintings, cartoon images, and archival photos, Say demonstrates his resilience to overcome difficult challenges and life circumstances without bitterness. He also brilliantly expresses how simple kindnesses can change people's lives.



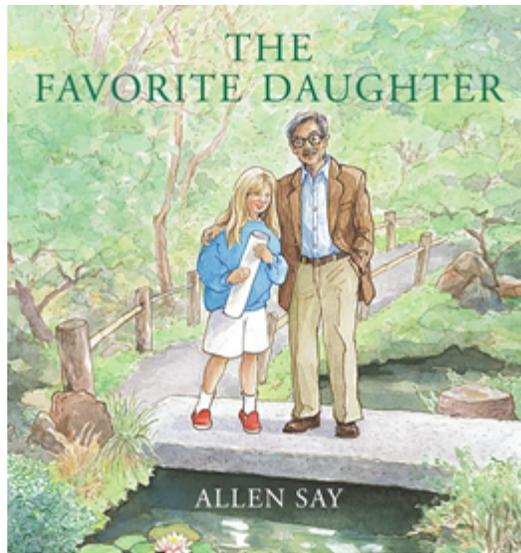


Many of Say's books speak to the immigrant experience that he and his family experienced first-hand. In *Home of the Brave*, his dream-like illustrations create a sort of fantasy story within a story, combining time travel elements with history, dealing with the Japanese Internment camps of World War II in America. Say includes his mother's personal history in *Tea with Milk*, where readers feel as if they know her just from his beautifully emotional watercolor artistry.



The Favorite Daughter, which is dedicated to Say's own daughter, reminds readers to celebrate their own heritage, and his delicate watercolors, along with photographs depict the daughter's experiences growing up Japanese American. The joys and frustrations are seen realistically and lovingly through Say's realistic illustrations.

When a picture tells a story, you don't have to write it. This came to me as a great revelation.
—Allen Say



Many of Allen Say's books represent his journey through life but allow readers to interpret his experiences into their own. His work has been exhibited at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Massachusetts, and most recently, the Multnomah County Library in his adopted hometown of Portland, Oregon.

Allen Say is one of America's most highly esteemed illustrators of children's books and is worthy of consideration for the Hans Christian Anderson Illustrator Award for his life's work in telling memorable stories through pictures for children.



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Appreciation Essay: “Allen Say”



“Every picture I paint comes from something I have seen or imagined; the same is true with writing. So everything I paint or write is essentially autobiographic.”

—Allen Say

Allen Say is one of the most beloved artists working today. Many of his stories are derived from his own experiences as a child. Author and illustrator of more than twenty works, Say has spent much of his time living between the cultures of the United States and Japan. Say was born in Yokohama, Japan in 1937. His mother, like the little girl in the Caldecott Medal winning book, *Grandfather’s Journey* and the young woman in *Tea with Milk*, was American born of Japanese descent and raised in California. She returned to Japan with her family at eighteen. His father was a Korean orphan who had been adopted by an English family and raised in Shanghai, China. His parents met in Osaka and moved to Yokohama.

From a young age, Say loved to draw and would be frequently found making pictures. World War II broke out when Say was only four-years-old. When Yokohama became too dangerous because of the constant bombings, Say’s mother took him and his sister to her family’s village to live with her uncle in rural western Japan where they waited out the war. Once the war was over, Say’s father moved the family to Sasebo on the island of Kyushu. Always changing homes and going to new schools made him feel uncomfortable wherever he lived. “So I escaped into reading and drawing,” he recalls. “The marvelous thing that happened to me was that during

recess I would draw. Students would stand behind me and watch. That's probably the first time I discovered that I had this power — it was the only power I had. “

When he was twelve, his parents divorced and he went to live in Tokyo with his grandmother. There, Say was embraced by Noro Shinpei, Japan’s leading cartoonist and the man he came to love as his “spiritual father.” Say moved to California with his father at the age of sixteen. As a young man he went to a military academy, studied architecture at the University of California at Berkeley, spent two years in the U.S. Army and eventually settled into a career in advertising. Say worked as a commercial photographer for twenty years before he stumbled into his career as an author-illustrator. Say's work brought him in contact with art directors and designers, who were often impressed with his ability to sketch out ideas before committing them to film. It was the encouragement of these people that led Say to freelance as an illustrator. His first book, *Dr. Smith's Safari*, was published in 1972.

For years, Say continued writing and illustrating children's books on a part-time basis. But it was while illustrating *The Boy of the Three Year Nap*, winner of a 1989 Caldecott Honor, that he recaptured the joy he had known working in his Sensei’s (Master's) studio. It was then that Say decided to make a full commitment to doing what he loves best: writing and illustrating children's books. Since then he has written and illustrated many books, including *Grandfather's Journey*, winner of the 1994 Caldecott Medal. He was inevitably attracted to exploring the divide of his Japanese youth and his American coming of age. Consequently, these and such other personal and family experiences often form the soul of his books.

When Say creates a book, he wants his pictures to tell the story. Sometimes he paints half the pictures for a book before he knows for sure what the story will be about. He says some of his best ideas could only come to him through pictures, not words. “You react physically to a work of art,” Say remarks. “When you break out in goose pimples, then you know you have something.”

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Appreciation Essay: “Portland Author and Artist Allen Say's Books for Children Unfold in Luminous Dreams” by Jeff Baker



When Allen Say moved to Portland in 1999, all the houses he looked at had dark rooms. The city is overcast and gloomy much of the year, and Say wasn't finding what he was after. “I'm a painter, and I have to have this natural, beautiful light,” he said, pointing to the windows and bare walls of his upstairs studio. “I took one look at this room and said, ‘OK, I can work here.’”

It's a lovely autumn day in Northeast Portland, and the late-morning light covers Say's drawing table and the cart of brushes and paints next to him. Joggers run by below the second-floor windows, but Say pays no attention to what's going on outside. He sometimes stays inside for three or four days at a time when he's working on a book, in a state somewhere between memory and a dream.

In 1994, Say won the Caldecott Medal, the highest honor in children's book publishing, for “Grandfather's Journey,” a story about going back and forth between Japan and the U.S., caught between two cultures, loving one and missing the other. Like many of his books, it is based on the life of someone in his family, and the beautifully composed and detailed paintings tell the story of his grandfather's emigration to California and return to Japan. In his acceptance speech, Say said “it is essentially a dream book, for the life's journey is an endless dreaming of the places we have left behind and the places we have yet to reach.”

Say came to the U.S. when he was 16, unable to communicate clearly in his new country. He's 73 now and writes his books in English, sometimes translating them into Japanese.

Some of the rooms in his house are empty, with nothing but paintings from his books on the walls. Visitors remove their shoes and are given house slippers. His wife, Miki, serves tea and speaks softly to her husband in Japanese. There's a large unfinished oil painting of her on an easel in his studio. Asked about it, Say smiled.

"I'm a storyteller," he said. "I can't just make pretty pictures ... At one point, I used to rationalize and justify my position by saying I felt that I was doing legitimate art disguised as children's literature. I'm not sure if I really feel that way now."

Why not?

"I don't think it's disguised," he said, laughing. "I'm not disguising anymore. There's some nudity and violence in this work, for God's sake."

Say's stories stand apart from the overcrowded, noisy world of children's books. Reading an Allen Say book is like moving through a gallery of fine paintings that tell a story without relying on words. Say was an apprentice to a famous cartoonist in Japan when he was young and worked as a commercial photographer in America, and his method of composition is to draw storyboards and then execute the paintings in sequence. He writes the text afterward. His audience is pulled from the outside into a place where fantasy and reality exist side by side and it's easy to get lost in a dream of light and shadow.

"It goes without saying that Allen's art, the luminous, almost photographic quality of his compositions, makes his books instantly recognizable and beloved," Kate O'Sullivan, the editor of his new book, "The Boy in the Garden," said. "The attention to detail, the play of light, the way that the pieces become windows to the stories ... I think readers feel they can step right in."

Pam Erlandson, the owner of A Children's Place Bookstore in Northeast Portland, agreed. "You can hear them," she said. "His books are very personal, and so beautiful to look at. They're wonderful."

At home Say is relaxed and friendly. He speaks precisely, loves to tell stories, and is quick to laugh. He calls himself "a notorious Mr. No" for his habit of refusing invitations to do public appearances and said his 2 p.m. Saturday visit to A Children's Place, a few blocks from his house, is enough for this year. Once he finishes a book, he forgets about it and moves on to the next one. He tells his publishers never to send him reviews of his books, good or bad, but they couldn't resist forwarding a Kirkus Book Review that said "The Boy in the Garden" was "a beautiful, moving, quietly mysterious read, ripe with possibilities for interpretation and contemplation."

"I was taken aback," Say said. "I was like, 'Why are they making so much noise about a book that's been out of my life for at least two years now?'"

Right now, Say's working on a book about his daughter. He's in what he calls "the doodling stage," sketching and working out ideas that eventually will lead to a story. He has a working title, "The Favorite Daughter," an affectionate joke between a father and his only child. She told him she had a happy childhood, and he said that meant there was no drama and he would have to concoct something.

There was plenty of drama in Say's childhood. His studio is clean at the moment because he's just finished a major project, adapting his autobiographical novel "The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice" into a graphic novel. It's the only non-picture book he's ever done, and it tells the story of his formative years in Japan, living alone in an apartment when he was 12 and serving as an apprentice to Noro Shinpei, a cartoonist who taught him about art and life and started him on his life's path.

The new book is called "Drawing From Memory" and is basically finished.

"Would you like to see it?" Say asked. He went to the other end of his studio and returned with a neat stack of drawings. The text will be added later, he said, and explained that "with the miracle of high tech" his new publisher, Scholastic Books, is creating a new font based on his lettering. As he turns the pages, time slips away and he is back in postwar Japan, a boy knocking at the door of Shinpei's studio.

Say was born in Yokohama in 1937. His father was a Korean orphan raised by a British family in Shanghai and his mother was a Japanese American born in California. During World War II he went with his mother and sister to the house of his mother's uncle near Tabuse, between Iwakuni and Hiroshima, and had to hide there for a year.

"The text here simply says when the war ended everything was broken," he said.

The family moved to an island, where his second-grade teacher was "the first grown-up to tell me that my drawing was not some kind of sickness," he said. Say's parents divorced when he was 8 and he eventually wound up living with his grandmother, who was not happy to see him. She made a deal with him that if he could gain admission to a prestigious school in Tokyo, she would let him live alone in an apartment. He got in and she lived up to her end of the deal. He was 12.

One day Say read an article in the newspaper that changed his life. It was about a boy who walked from Osaka to Tokyo to study with Shinpei, the famous cartoonist. Say showed up at Shinpei's studio and the cartoonist agreed to take him on as well. He and Tokida, the other apprentice, were soon signing their names into the backgrounds of the comics, thinking Shinpei wouldn't notice, and getting into all manner of adventures, getting caught in demonstrations, going to a van Gogh exhibition and being unable to see the paintings because of the crowds. Shinpei arranged for them to take life drawing classes -- at first Say was so embarrassed he couldn't look directly at the nude model -- and bought them art supplies.

Shinpei was their sensei (teacher) and a father figure for Say. "Drawing From Memory" is alive with photographs and drawings and cartoons; Shinpei created characters based on Tokida and Say and put them in his strip.

During his apprenticeship with Shinpei, Say was drawing a copy of Michelangelo's "David" when he had an out-of-body experience. He floated to the ceiling, "a big eyeball," and looked down at himself doing the best drawing of his life. "As in a dream I floated, falling and falling, back into my body," he wrote in "The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice." For weeks he tried to replicate the experience. It didn't happen often, but sometimes he seemed to go outside himself and become an artist capable of greatness.

Say's father, remarried with a new family, had an opportunity to go to America and offered to take his son. Say hesitated; Shinpei quoted an old saying: "Let your dear child journey. When you have a chance to travel, travel. Traveling is the greatest teacher of all." Say went to Yokohama to ask his mother about America and saw her with another man, which made him realize that everyone has their own life, different from any other's.

The evening after a farewell dinner with Tokida and Shinpei, Say went to his apartment for the last time. He took all his sketchbooks to a vacant lot and burned his drawings. Feeling cleansed, he was ready to start a new journey in a new country.

Those adventures have continued for almost 50 years, and they're not over. Say said he "squandered 20 years" working as a commercial photographer in San Francisco and has been trying to "atone for my lapse ever since." He didn't publish his first book until he was 55 and swears that his 39th move, to Portland, won't be his last.

"I believe in periodic deracination to shock my system," he said. "... I prefer to go to a place where you don't know anyone and don't know the language, but I'm getting a little old for that. I've got to worry about medical insurance and all that sort of thing. So here I am." There he is, turning ideas into art, not knowing what will happen until it happens, looking down at himself as if in a dream, thinking about what Shinpei told him early in "The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice":

"Pay attention to all that goes on around you. Remember, memory is the most important asset to an artist. What we call imagination is rearrangement of memory. You cannot imagine without memory."

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Awards and Other Distinctions

- *A Canticle to the Waterbirds* (1968) (illustrations, written by Brother Antoninus)
- *Two Ways of Seeing* (1971) (illustrations, edited by Wilson Pinney)
- *Dr. Smith's Safari* (1972)
- *The Nose: A Tale Based on "Hana" by R. Akutagawa* (1973)
- *Once Under the Cherry Blossom Tree: An Old Japanese Tale* (1974)
- *The Feast of Lanterns* (1976)
- *Morning Glories* (1976) (illustrations & translation of Naoya Shiga's story)
- *Magic and the Night River* (1978) (illustrations, written by Eve Bunting)
- *The Lucky Yak* (1980) (illustrations, written by Annette Lawson) (***New York Times* Best Illustrated award**)
- *The Secret Cross of Lorraine* (1981) (illustrations, written by Thea Brow)
- *The Bicycle Man* (1982) (**ALA Notable Book, Booklist Editors' Choice, Reading Rainbow Feature Selection**)
- *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (1984) (illustrations, written by Ina R. Friedman) (**Christopher Award, Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor, ALA Notable Book, Reading Rainbow Review Book**)
- *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (1988) (illustrations, written by Dianne Snyder) (**Caldecott Honor, ALA Notable Children's Book, Boston Globe/Horn Book Award, Booklist Editors' Choice, Horn Book Fanfare Selection, SLJ Best Book**)
- *A River Dream* (1988) (***New York Times* Ten Best Illustrated Children's Books**)
- *The Lost Lake* (1989)
- *El Chino* (1990) (**Booklist Editors' Choice, Bulletin Blue Ribbon, Horn Book Fanfare Selection**)
- *The Big Book for Peace* (1990) (Written by Yoshiko Uchida)
- *Tree of Cranes* (1991) (**ALA Notable Book, Bulletin Blue Ribbon**)
- *Grandfather's Journey* (1993) (**Caldecott Medal, ALA Notable Book, Booklist Editors' Choice, Boston Globe/Horn Book Award, Horn Book Fanfare Selection, School Library Journal Best Books of the Year, New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year**)
- *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice* (First edition - 1979; Second edition - 1994) (**ALA Notable Book and Best Book for Young Adults**)
- *Stranger in the Mirror* (1995)
- *Emma's Rug* (1996) (**Parents' Choice Award, Parenting Reading Magic Award**)
- *Allison* (1997) (**Parents' Choice Silver Award, Parenting Reading Magic Award, National Parenting Publications Book Award**)
- *Tea with Milk* (1999) (**Riverbank Review Book of Distinction, Bulletin Blue Ribbon, SLJ Best Book, ALA Notable Book**)
- *The Sign Painter* (2000) (***New York Times* Editors' Choice, *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year, *Newsweek* Magazine Best Book of the Year**)
- *Home of the Brave* (2002)

- *Music for Alice* (2004)
- *Kamishibai Man* (2005) (**Parents Choice Award, Oregon Book Award finalist, North Carolina Children's Book Award finalist**)
- *Erika-san* (2009)
- *The Boy in the Garden* (2010) (**Parents Choice Award – Picture Book Silver Medal**)
- *Drawing From Memory* (2011) (**Booklist Editors' Choice, Silbert Honor, Oregon Book Award**)
- *The Favorite Daughter* (2013) (**NAPPA Gold Award, Capitol Choices: Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens, Oregon Book Award finalist, Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award finalist, Volunteer State Book Award finalist**)
- *The Inker's Shadow* (2015) (**ALA Notable Children's Books**)
- *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* (2017) (**Schneider Family Book Award**)

Bibliography

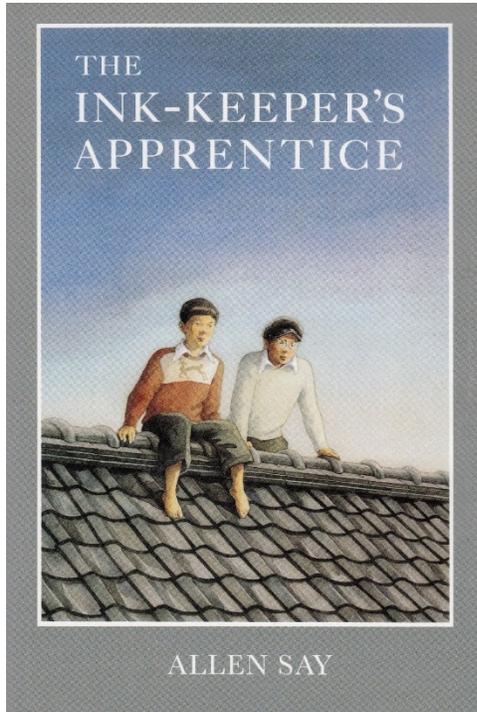
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- *The Favorite Daughter* (2013)
- *The Inker's Shadow* (2015)
- *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* (2017)

Translated Editions

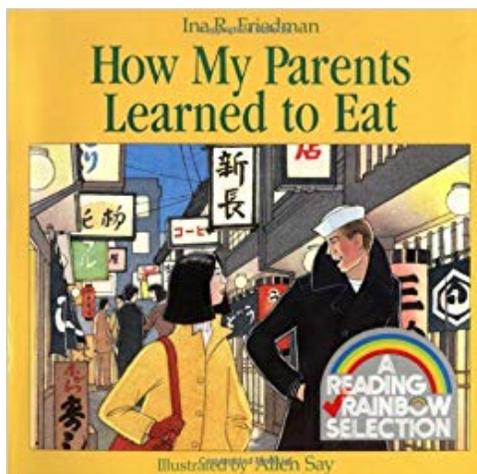
- *Dr. Smith's Safari* (1972)
 - *Doktor Schmidts Safari* (German)
- *Once Under the Cherry Blossom Tree: An Old Japanese Tale* (1974)
 - *Unter dem Kirschblütenbaum : eine alte japanische Geschichte* (German)
- *The Lucky Yak* (1980) (illustrations, written by Annette Lawson)
 - *Le yak heureux* (French)
 - *El Yak feliz* (Spanish)
- *The Bicycle Man* (1982)
 - **じてんしゃのへいたいさん** (Japanese)
- *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (1988) (illustrations, written by Dianne Snyder)
 - *Taro der Dauerschläfer* (German)
 - *Siesta-de-tres-años* (Spanish)
 - *Le garçon qui aimait trop la sieste* (French)
 - **さんねんねたろう** (Japanese)
- *A River Dream* (1988)
 - *J'ai rêvé d'une rivière* (French)
- *The Lost Lake* (1989)
 - **はるかな湖** (Japanese)
 - **失落之湖** (Chinese)
- *El Chino* (1990)
 - **中國門牛士王邦維** (Chinese)
- *Tree of Cranes* (1991)
 - *L'arbre aux oiseaux* (French)
- *Grandfather's Journey* (1993)
 - *Großvaters Reise* (German)
 - *Le voyage de grand-père* (French)
 - **おじいさんのたび** (Japanese)
 - **外公的旅程** (Chinese)
- *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice* (First edition - 1979; Second edition - 1994)
 - *Die Schüler des Mangameisters* (German)
 - *L'auberge de la bande dessinée* (French)
- *Stranger in the Mirror* (1995)
 - *Le visage de grand-père* (French)
- *Emma's Rug* (1996)
 - **수미의작은깔개** (Korean)
 - *Le tapis d'Emma* (French)
- *Allison* (1997)
 - *Allison* (German)
 - *Allison* (French)

- 艾莉森的家 (Chinese)
- *Tea with Milk* (1999)
 - *Té con leche* (Spanish)
- *Kamishibai Man* (2005)
 - *Der Kamishibai-Mann* (German)
 - Le bonhomme Kamishibai (French)
 - 紙しばい屋さん (Japanese)
 - Zhi xi ren (Chinese)
 - คุณตาหัดเล่านิทาน (Thai)

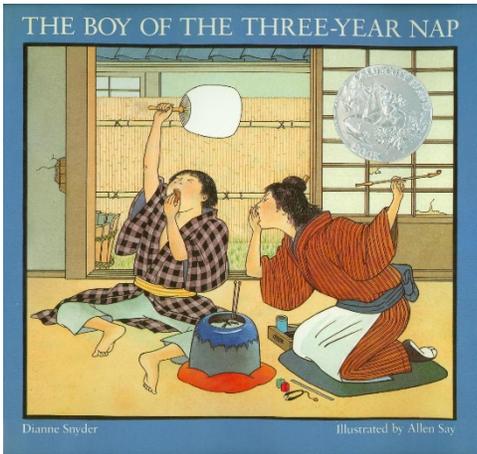
Ten Important Titles: Editions and Publishers



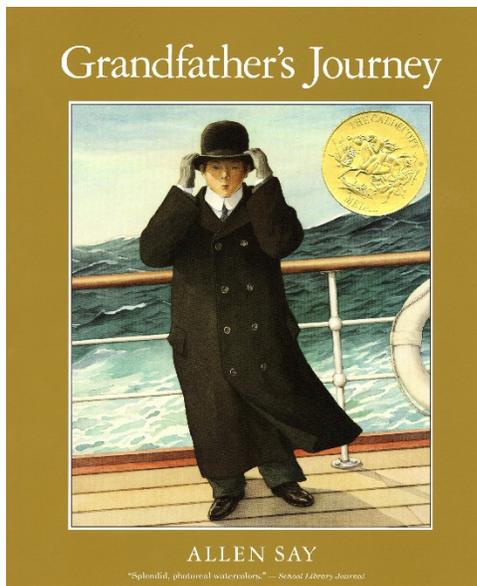
The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice (First edition - 1979; Second edition - 1994) Harper & Row, Houghton Mifflin



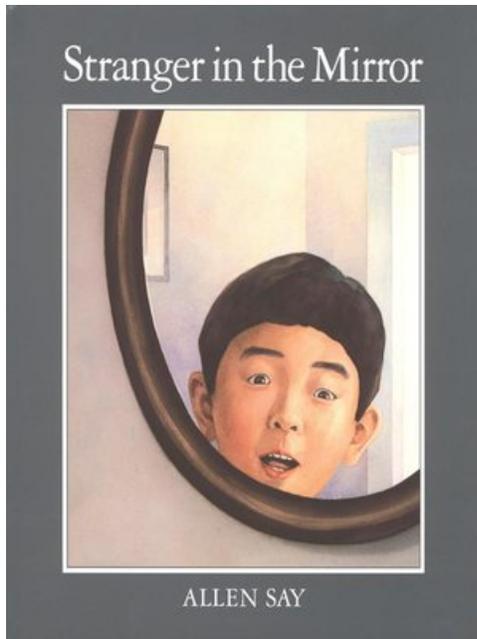
How My Parents Learned to Eat (1984) (illustrations, written by Ina R. Friedman) Houghton Mifflin



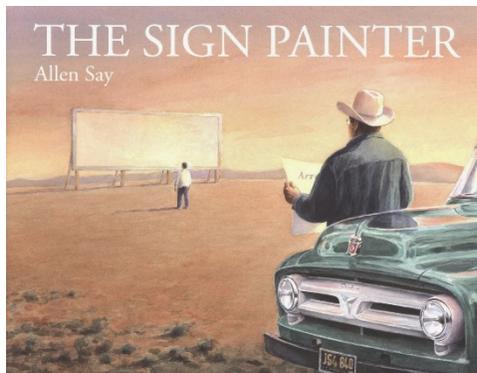
The Boy of the Three-Year Nap (text by Dianne Snyder)
(1988) Houghton Mifflin



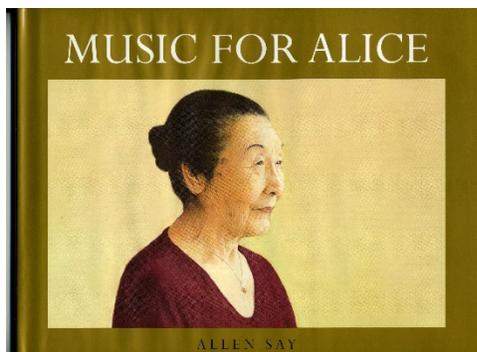
Grandfather's Journey (1993) Houghton Mifflin



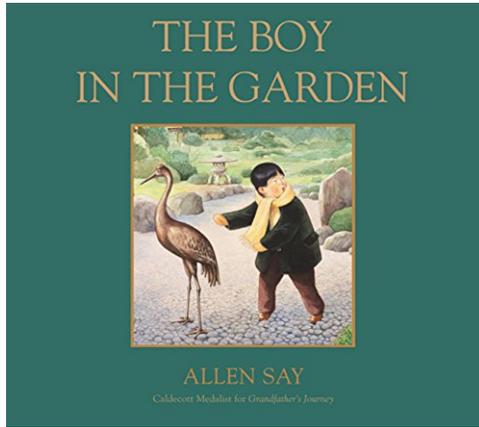
Stranger in the Mirror (1995) Houghton Mifflin



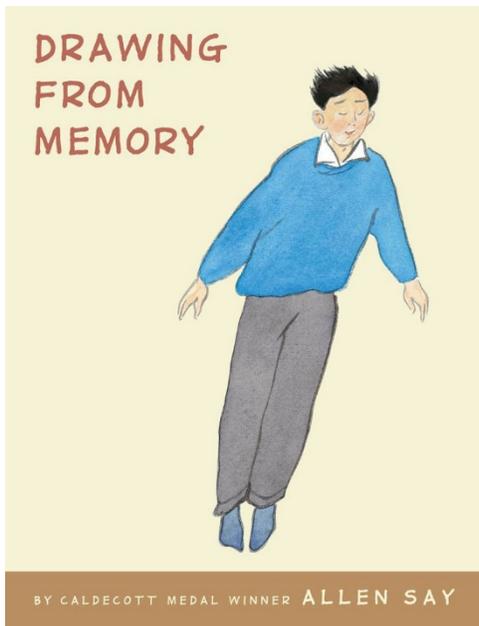
The Sign Painter (2000) Houghton Mifflin



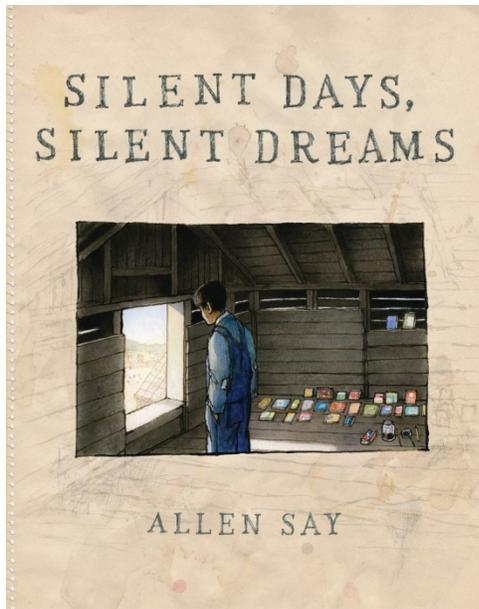
Music for Alice (2004) Houghton Mifflin



The Boy in the Garden (2010) Houghton Mifflin



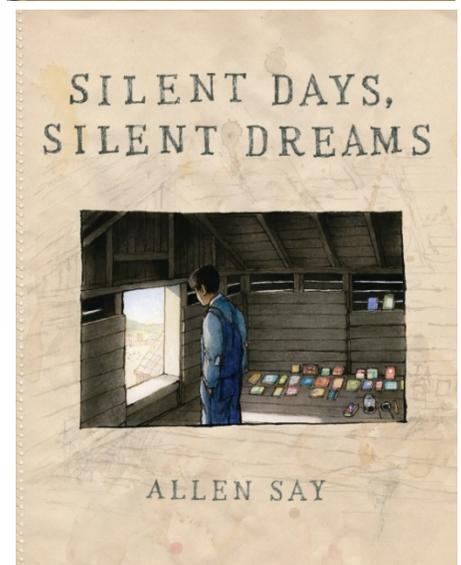
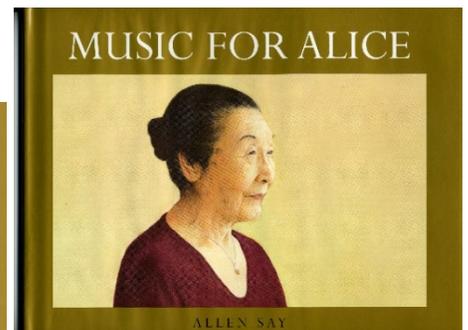
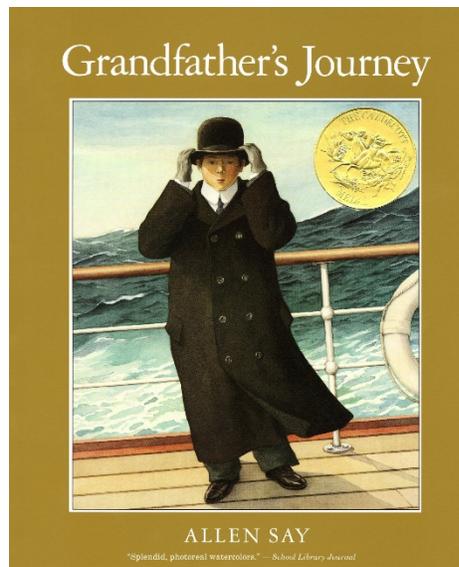
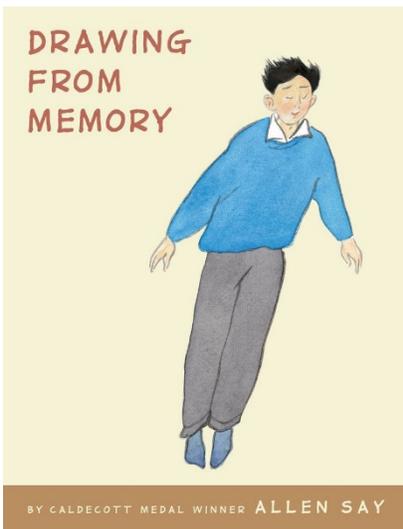
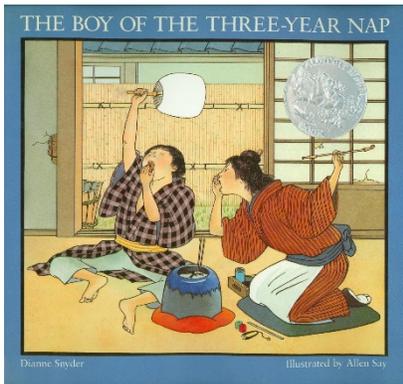
Drawing from Memory (2011) Scholastic



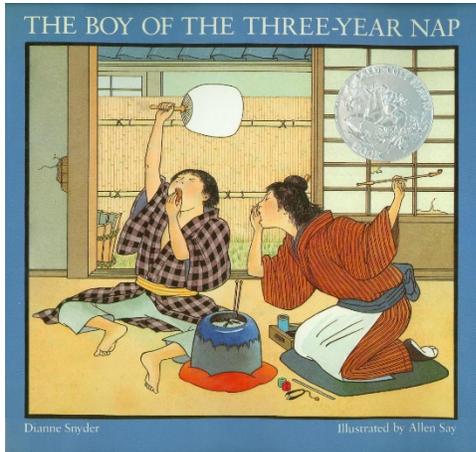
Silent Days, Silent Dreams (2017) Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Books

Books Submitted to the Jury

- *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (text by Dianne Snyder) (1988)
- *Grandfather's Journey* (1993)
- *Music for Alice* (2004)
- *Drawing from Memory* (2015)
- *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* (2017)



Reviews



***The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (text by Dianne Snyder) (1988)**

The New York Times

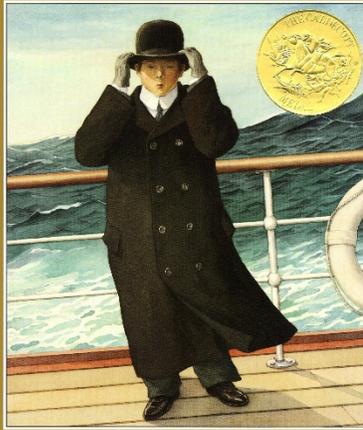
<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/22/books/childrens-books-bookshelf-161788.html>

Long ago in a Japanese village there lived a boy who was “as lazy as a rich man's cat.” Taro did nothing but sleep and eat. Mostly sleep. The folkloric story of how he ends up well housed, well married and well employed has been illustrated with great style and wit in the manner of classic Japanese woodcuts.

School Library Journal [<http://bookverdict.com/details.xqy?uri=Product-51816891633679.xml>]

The accuracy of the visualized Japanese landscape and architecture help considerably in casting this retold folktale into an Oriental mold. A very industrious widow watches her very lazy teenage son (whose nickname is the title of the book) grow up. And readers watch her watching him in tightly crafted scenes that are somewhat reminiscent of 17th- or 18th-century Japanese woodcuts: fishing boats on the river; bamboo-windowed houses; blue-mountained backdrops with birds in V-formation; etc. Smoothly applied paint (seemingly air brushed at times) depict the peaceful Japanese landscape. The costuming and facial gestures, as the boy tricks a rich neighbor into rebuilding his mother's house and allowing him to marry his daughter, create a dramatic effect. There is a sense of authenticity to the pictures that informs readers about a particular lifestyle while simultaneously entertaining them with an engaging, almost universal trickster tale.

Grandfather's Journey



ALLEN SAY

"Splendid, pictorial watercolors." — School Library Journal

Grandfather's Journey (1993)

Kirkus [<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/allen-say/grandfathers-journey/>]

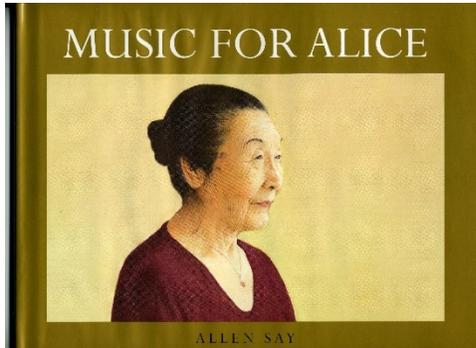
"The funny thing is, the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other," observes Say near the end of this poignant account of three generations of his family's moves between Japan and the US. Say's grandfather came here as a young man, married, and lived in San Francisco until his daughter was "nearly grown" before returning to Japan; his treasured plan to visit the US once again was delayed, forever as it turned out, by WW II. Say's American-born mother married in Japan (cf. *Tree of Cranes*, 1991), while he, born in Yokohama, came here at 16. In lucid, graceful language, he chronicles these passages, reflecting his love of both

countries—plus the expatriate's ever-present longing for home—in both simple text and exquisitely composed watercolors: scenes of his grandfather discovering his new country and returning with new appreciation to the old, and pensive portraits recalling family photos, including two evoking the war and its aftermath. Lovely, quiet—with a tenderness and warmth new to this fine illustrator's work. (*Nonfiction/Picture book*. 4+)

Publishers Weekly [<https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780395570357>]

Say transcends the achievements of his *Tree of Cranes* and *A River Dream* with this breathtaking picture book, at once a very personal tribute to his grandfather and a distillation of universally shared emotions. Elegantly honed text accompanies large, formally composed paintings to convey Say's family history; the sepia tones and delicately faded colors of the art suggest a much-cherished and carefully preserved family album. A portrait of Say's grandfather opens the book, showing him in traditional Japanese dress, "a young man when he left his home in Japan and went to see the world." Crossing the Pacific on a steamship, he arrives in North America and explores the land by train, by riverboat and on foot. One especially arresting, light-washed painting presents Grandfather in shirtsleeves, vest and tie, holding his suit jacket under his arm as he gazes over a prairie: "The endless farm fields reminded him of the ocean he had crossed." Grandfather discovers that "the more he traveled, the more he longed to see new places," but he nevertheless returns home to marry his childhood sweetheart. He brings her to California, where their daughter is born, but her youth reminds him inexorably of his own, and when she is nearly grown, he takes the family back to Japan. The restlessness endures: the daughter cannot be at home in a Japanese village; he himself cannot forget California. Although war shatters Grandfather's hopes to revisit his second land, years later Say repeats the journey: "I came to love the land my grandfather had loved, and I stayed on and on until I had a daughter of my own." The internal struggle of his grandfather also continues within Say, who writes that he, too, misses the places of his childhood and periodically returns to them. The tranquility

of the art and the powerfully controlled prose underscore the profundity of Say's themes, investing the final line with an abiding, aching pathos: "The funny thing is, the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other." Ages 4-8.



***Music for Alice* (2004)**

Kirkus [<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/allen-say/music-for-alice/>]

Understated full-page water-color paintings and a spare text tell the life story of Alice Sumida, who "loved dancing more than anything else." As a child, Alice wished that "Daddy's tractor would turn into a coach and take me dancing." After college she married Mark, who sold seeds. Like thousands of other Americans of

Japanese descent, the couple was forced to evacuate during WWII. In the sandy desert of eastern Oregon, they leased land to start a farm of their own, and after years of hard work became "the largest gladiola bulb growers in the country." Eventually, they sold the business. "What good is success," Alice thought, "if we can't enjoy ourselves?" After her husband's death, Alice visits the farm, now in ruins. In a poignant moment, Alice realizes that now she can dance: "And dance I do—all that I can." Each of Say's exquisite paintings tells a story; together they create a moving testament to a life of hard work and dreams—dreams that find fulfillment in unanticipated ways. (*Picture book. All ages*)

School Library Journal [<http://bookverdict.com/details.xqy?uri=Product-88930184.xml>]

Life changes drastically for Alice when World War II breaks out. Like many other Japanese Americans living on the West Coast, she and her husband are forced from their home. They choose to work as farm hands rather than be sent to an internment camp. Together, they overcome every indignity and challenge that come their way, and eventually build the largest gladiola bulb farm in the country. Say relates the true story of Alice Sumida in an understated and eloquent style. Alice's childhood love of dancing is deftly woven into the imagery of the text. As in much of his work, the masterful illustrations provide an emotional depth not always evident in the narration. The overall design, resembling a family photo album, accentuates the book as personal history. The detailed portraits and soft colors of the farm give way to drab hues and figures with nondescript features and wide-brimmed hats that hide their eyes and their identities—symbolic of the plight of Japanese Americans during the war. The final pictures of a now elderly Alice depict the spirit and dignity that her life story suggests. Although the book has much to recommend it, it may have more limited appeal than some of Say's earlier works. It is not as personal as *Grandfather's Journey* (1993) or *Tea with Milk* (1999, both Houghton). Many young readers may lack the perspective to relate to a tale that spans decades and deals with such complex themes. Still, with proper introduction, this offering will be appreciated by sensitive and sophisticated youngsters.

DRAWING FROM MEMORY



BY CALDECOTT MEDAL WINNER ALLEN SAY

***Drawing from Memory* (2015)**

Kirkus, starred [<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/allen-say/drawing-memory/>]

Exquisite drawings, paintings, comics and photographs balance each other perfectly as they illustrate Say's childhood path to becoming an artist.

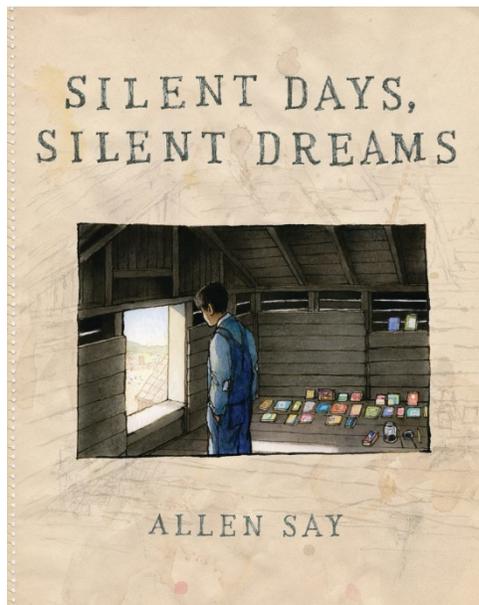
Although its story overlaps with *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice* (1979), this visual chronicle is a fresh new wonder. It opens with a soft watercolor map of Japan on the left, framed in a rectangle, while on the right is a delicate, full-bleed watercolor of Yokohama's seashore and fishing village, with two black-and-white photographs pasted on: Say as a child, and the stone beach wall. The early arc takes readers from Say's 1937 birth, through family moves to escape 1941 bombings and then Say's nigh-emancipation at age 12, when his

mother supported him in his own Tokyo apartment. The one-room apartment "was for me to study in, but studying was far from my mind ... this was going to be my art studio!" The art table's drawer handle resembles a smile. Happily apprenticing with famous cartoonist Noro Shinpei, Say works dedicatedly on comic panels, still-lives and life drawing. Nothing—not political unrest, not U.S. occupation, not paternal disapproval—derails his singular goal of becoming a cartoonist. Shinpei's original comics are reproduced here, harmonizing with Say's own art from that time and the graphic-novel-style panels, drawings and paintings created for this book.

Aesthetically superb; this will fascinate comics readers and budding artists while creating new Say fans. (author's note) (*Graphic memoir. 10 & up*)

Publishers Weekly [<https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780545176866/>]

Retooling some of the material in his autobiographical middle-grade novel *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice* (1994), Say tells the story of his decidedly nontraditional Japanese upbringing, supplying watercolors, photographs, and humorous sketches to create a vivid record of life in postwar Tokyo. Say's family rented him his own apartment when he was 12 so he could attend a better school. "The one-room apartment was for me to study in," he writes, beneath a b&w sketch of his desk, "but studying was far from my mind... this was going to be my art studio!" (A second drawing, in color, shows his conception of the perfect desk, covered with paints and brushes.) Japan's most famous cartoonist, Noro Shinpei, accepted Say as an apprentice until Say immigrated to the United States in 1953. Say's account of his relationship with Noro (who later called Say "the treasure of my life") is the centerpiece of the narrative. As the story of a young artist's coming of age, Say's account is complex, poignant, and unfailingly honest. Say's fans—and those who also feel the pull of the artist's life—will be captivated. Ages 10–up.



Silent Days, Silent Dreams (2017)

Kirkus, starred review

[<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/allen-say/silent-days-silent-dreams/>]

An imagined biography in words and pictures of the self-taught white artist James Castle.

James Castle was born in 1899 on a farm in rural Idaho, “deaf, mute, autistic, and probably dyslexic.” Using interviews, written biographical material, and Castle’s own drawings as guides, Say, writing in the voice of Robert “Bob” Beach, Castle’s nephew, offers a sensitive portrait of a person compelled to draw despite abuse and lack of drawing materials. Considered “ineducable” by the principal of the Idaho School for the Deaf James

attended from ages 10 to 15 (he also told James’ father not to let him draw), James used burnt matchsticks, soot mixed with his own saliva, and scrap paper to draw in secret. When Beach showed some of Castle’s drawings to his art professor, the professor, impressed, arranged an exhibition. More exhibitions followed, and Castle moved into a used trailer—by far the nicest studio he ever had. It’s a small but deep triumph that this misunderstood, determined artist became discovered by the art world during his lifetime. “I think he was happy,” narrator Bob says of this period, and it’s a wistful note that Say’s illustrations—some in Castle’s own style, some darkly black and white, and some in color—give heartfelt resonance to.

With sensitive text and powerful illustrations, Say brings this remarkable, inspiring life to poignant reality. (author’s note, bibliography) (*Picture book/biography*. 8-15)

Publishers Weekly, starred review [<https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780545927611>]

Say (*The Inker’s Shadow*) tells the haunting story of outsider artist James Castle, a deaf and autistic man whose talent was not recognized until late in his life. Narrating in the voice of Castle’s nephew, Say describes how Castle was born in 1899 into an Idaho farm family with no resources to help their son. He never learned to speak or read; when upset, he shrieked uncontrollably. But he found consolation in drawing and made some 15,000 pictures, often with soot and sharpened sticks after teachers confiscated his drawing materials. Drawings done in the style of Castle accompany the story—blocky, sometimes surreal human figures and houses—and Say also supplies pen-and-ink vignettes and anguished charcoal portraits of the bullying the man endured throughout his life.. After living alone in outbuildings on family properties for decades, Castle at last came to the attention of local artists and gained some financial security. Say’s moving portrait of Castle’s work and life (“I think he was

happy,” he concludes) pays tribute to a man who was compelled to create despite the torments he underwent. Ages 8–12.

