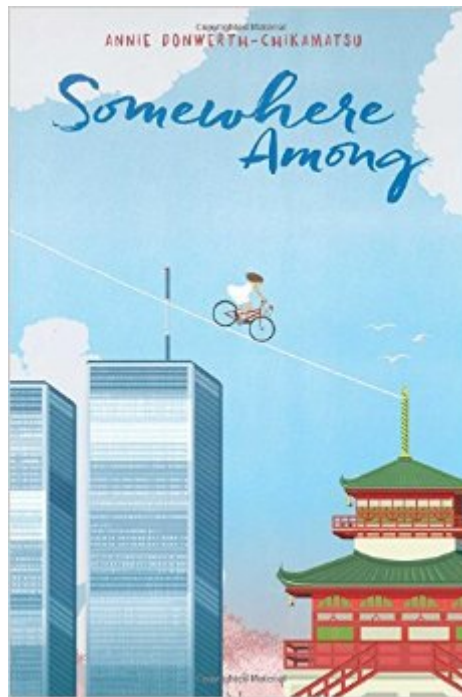


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# Somewhere Among



## Synopsis

In this beautiful and haunting debut novel in verse, called "a tender piece on connectedness" in a starred review from Kirkus Reviews, an American-Japanese girl struggles with the loneliness of being caught between two worlds when the tragedy of 9/11 strikes an ocean away. Eleven-year-old Ema has always been of two worlds--her father's Japanese heritage and her mother's life in America. She lives in Japan and has spent summers in California for as long as she can remember, but this year she and her mother are staying with her grandparents in western Tokyo as they await the arrival of Ema's baby sibling. Her mother's pregnancy has been tricky, putting everyone on edge, but Ema's heart is singing--finally, there will be someone else who will understand what it's like to belong and not belong at the same time. But Ema's good spirits are muffled by her grandmother who is cold, tightfisted, and quick to reprimand her for the slightest infraction. Then, when their stay is extended and Ema must go to a new school, her worries of not belonging grow. And when the tragedy of 9/11 strikes, Ema, her parents, and the world watch as the twin towers fall... As Ema watches her mother grieve for her country across the ocean--threatening the safety of her pregnancy--and her beloved grandfather falls ill, she feels more helpless and hopeless than ever. And yet, surrounded by tragedy, Ema sees for the first time the tender side of her grandmother, and the reason for the penny-pinching and sternness make sense--her grandmother has been preparing so they could all survive the worst. Dipping and soaring, *Somewhere Among* is the story of one girl's search for identity, inner peace, and how she discovers that hope can indeed rise from the ashes of disaster.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 840 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 448 pages

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ISBN-10: 1481437860

ISBN-13: 978-1481437868

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #115,445 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American](#) #116 in [Books >](#)

Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #182 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Baby

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Disclosure: I received a review copy (ARC) from the publisher in exchange for a honest review. Somewhere Among is a realistic fiction about a girl straddling two worlds, two cultures, America and Japan; all while moving across the country with her family to live in Japan, anticipating the birth of a new baby and coping with the disaster that hit home (America) while she's hundreds of miles away. I'm sure everyone in the world was watching when the Twin Towers were hit in New York on September 11, 2001. It was the tragedy heard round the world. This year marks the 15th Anniversary of that day, and still I remember it vividly. I was around Ema's age, our heroine of the story and I still recall where I was at, what I was doing and who I was with. It shook everyone's lives, those watching from their TV to the people living in other countries. So when I was given the chance to review Somewhere Among, I knew immediately that it was definitely not a book I wanted to pass up. And I'm so glad I didn't. I've never or don't recall, at least in quite some time, reading a free-verse poem novel. I'm positive there are plenty of poem books, but I can't say I've read many of them. Somewhere Among is written entirely in Free-Verse. It was a very different reading experience and a pleasant one at that. The book is just shy of 450 pages, but since it's written in verses, it was a quick read. I love reading about the Japanese culture; seeing the similarities and difference between the East and West's views. One thing we all have in common, regardless of culture is that we all wish/hope the best for our families in terms of happiness, health and stability. That hasn't changed from generation to generation.

Review Somewhere Among offers readers a glimpse at daily life in Japan. Japanese culture, social expectations, superstitions, and day-to-day life give the novel an additional character, in that it influences each family member's actions and emotions. At its heart, Somewhere Among is about peace and being connected: to each other and to the world. Though different in many ways, Ema's life is universal. The Japanese school day runs differently than an American, still Ema feels the questioning eyes all new students feel. She faces the anger of a bully, who targets her because she looks different. Ema's home life is different from most home life in America. She

has less freedom and cultural expectations are higher. Still, Ema feels much the same as many kids her age. She wants her own space, more freedom, and for family to stop treating her like a child. Simple yet complex, just like the story as a whole. Somewhere Among is from Ema's point-of-view and written in free-verse (making for a faster read). Verse can offer more information on textually elegant pages. A page with one or two lines, and nothing else, hits the reader in ways bold or capitalized text never can. When expertly written, novels in verse can be mesmerizing. Immediately, K. A. Holt and Helen Hopkins come to mind. Now, I also think of Annie Donwerth-Chikamatsu. Donwerth-Chikamatsu writes beautifully in both form and function, succinctly relating Ema's Japanese life. Somewhere Among is brilliant. September 11th resurfaces fears rooted in World War II and Japan's promise to its people. This serves to support the themes of connectedness and peace (world, individuals, and self). Inter-character moments shine a light upon daily Japanese life.

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