



The Language Inside

Holly Thompson

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A nuanced novel in verse that explores identity, friendship, love, loss, and home in a multicultural world.

For Emma Karas, Japan is home. It is where she has lived almost her entire life. But when her mother falls ill, Emma's family moves in with her grandmother, back in Massachusetts. Emma is desperately homesick. She feels out of place in the U.S. and starts to get painful migraines. Then Emma begins volunteering at a long-term care center, helping a patient, Zena, write down her poems. There, Emma meets Samnang, a cute boy from her high school. As the weeks pass, Emma and Samnang grow close. But when Emma is given the choice, will she stay in Massachusetts, or return home to Japan?

An ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults Selection

A Bankstreet Best Book of the Year

A Notable Books for a Global Society Selection

A Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts

“With **beautiful** language and **deep** sensitivity, Holly Thompson explores the courage it takes to find your own voice.” —Patricia McCormick, author of National Book Award finalist *Never Fall Down*

“Pulsing with pain and passion, with **humor, heart, and hope.**” —Sonya Sones, author of *What My Mother Doesn't Know* and *To Be Perfectly Honest*

*“Thompson captures perfectly the feeling of belonging elsewhere. A **sensitive** and **compelling** read that will inspire teens to contemplate how they can make a difference.” —*School Library Journal*, **Starred**

“Thompson nimbly braids political tragedy, natural disaster, PTSD, connections among families, and a cautious, quiet romance into an elegant whole. This is an **artistic** picture of devastation, fragility, bonds and choices.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Thompson, working in a free-verse style that becomes a seamless piece of a world imbued with poetry, weaves [the plot strands] together skillfully. The result is a **touching** portrait of Emma working through loss and opportunity as Lowell becomes not just “not-Japan,” but the site of new connections and a possible **romance.**” —*Publishers Weekly*

“The **vivid** imagery in the lyrical free verse lends immediacy to Emma's turbulent feelings. Readers will finish the book knowing that, like Zena, the Cambodian refugees, and the tsunami victims, Emma has the strength to ‘a hundred times fall down / a hundred and one times get up.’” —*The Horn Book Magazine*

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William Lyons:

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