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Here I Am

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

In an author's note at the end of **Here I Am** Patti Kim describes how she moved to the US from Busan, in Korea when she was four years old. That experience was the inspiration for the book that she and Sonia Sanchez have created, a book that gives readers, of whatever background, vivid insight into what it's like to leave your home for a new and very different place.

The first image shows a young boy gazing forlornly from an aeroplane window. Further images show him and his family at the airport, Mum and Dad hurrying through the checkout with his baby brother or sister, while he trails behind, always looking back over his shoulder. The book is virtually wordless, and in these early spreads any words at all – on signs or later the blackboard at school – are just meaningless jumbles of letters. Colours are muted browns and greys for the most part, with pages broken up into jumbled squares of images, until the boy finds a seed in his pocket. Then the story opens out into full page illustrations, bright trees, flowers and birds signifying the comfort the seed gives the boy as he remembers his old home. The seed continues to console him until he accidentally drops it out of a window. A young girl picks it up and soon he's on her trail, following her through the neighbourhood, which now seems a lot less frightening than before. There's all sorts to spot in the pages, stories on every page in fact, and in the final pages we see the boy and the girl plant the seed together – the new country is his home.

This is a beautiful and evocative book, and an important one when immigration has become such a talking point in our society.

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