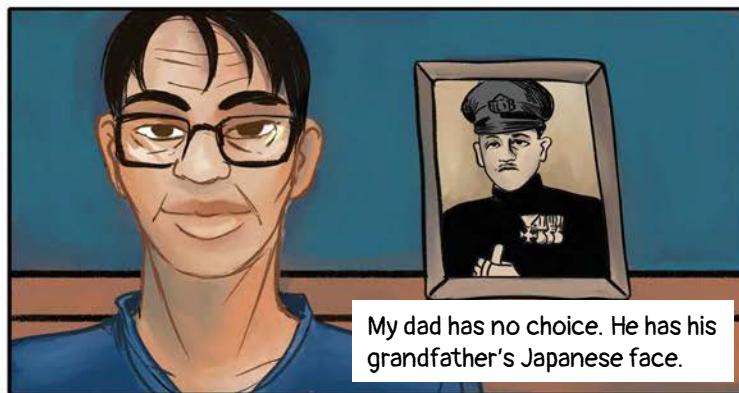
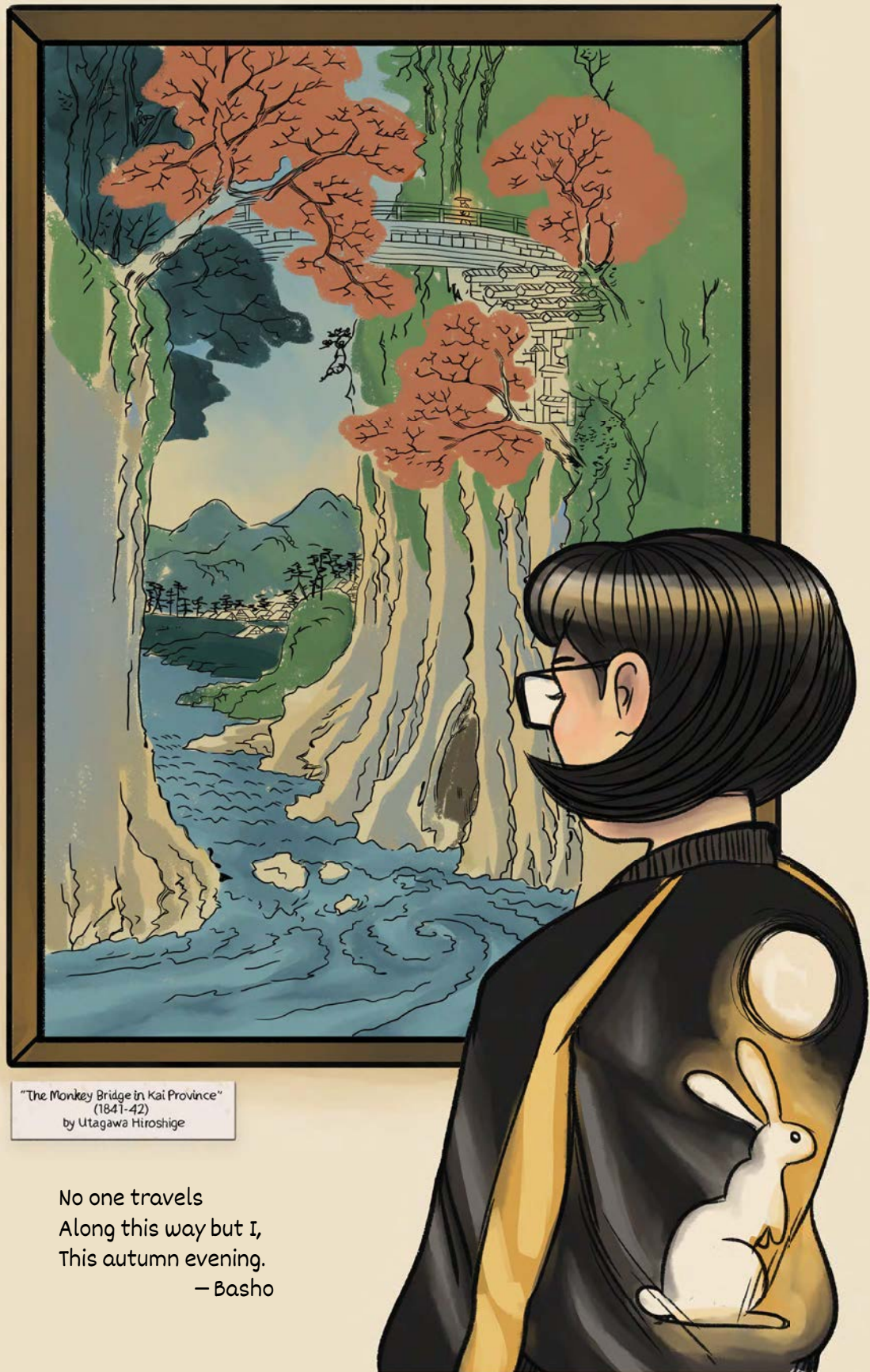


Something Alive

by Jem Yoshioka





"The Monkey Bridge in Kai Province"
(1841-42)
by Utagawa Hiroshige

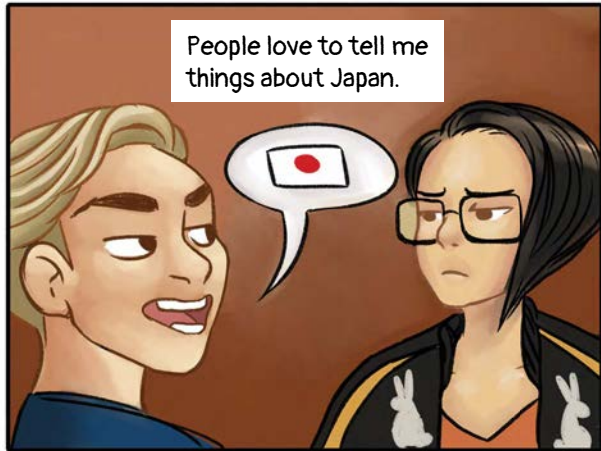
No one travels
Along this way but I,
This autumn evening.
— Basho



I've lived most of
my life on these tiny
southern islands,
not their sisters in
the north.



I feel lost in both places.



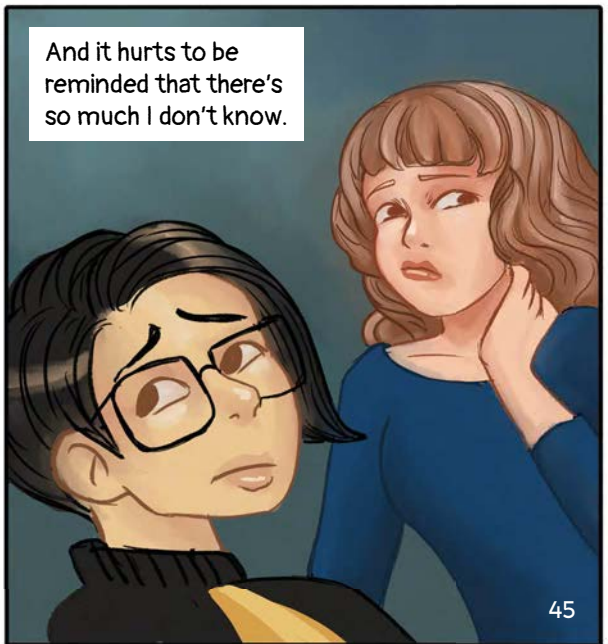
People love to tell me
things about Japan.



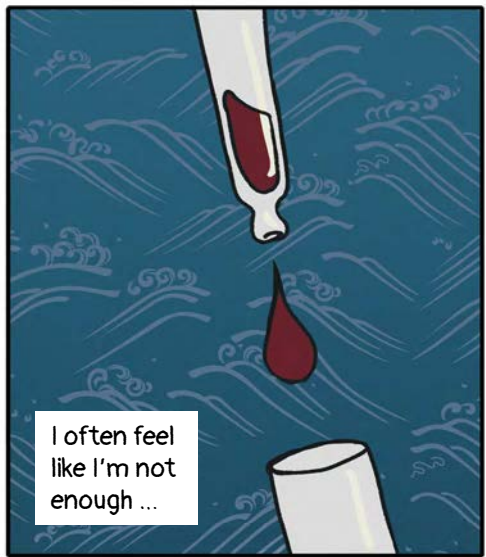
Others expect me to
answer their questions.



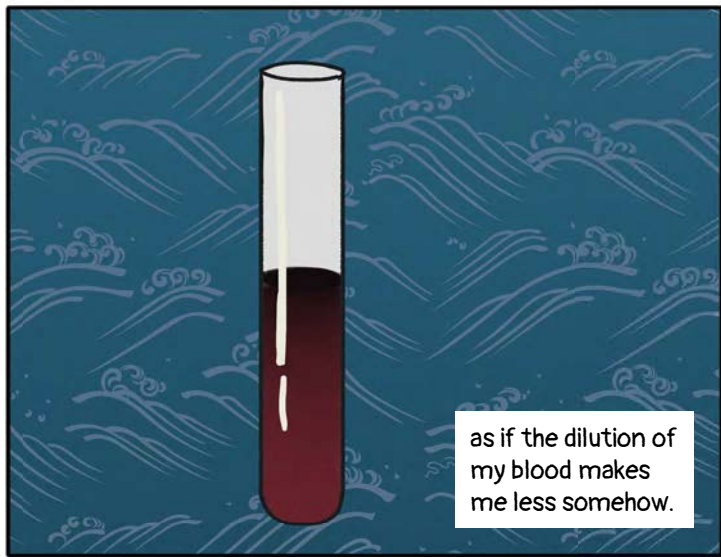
It's frustrating to hear things
I've known my whole life.



And it hurts to be
reminded that there's
so much I don't know.

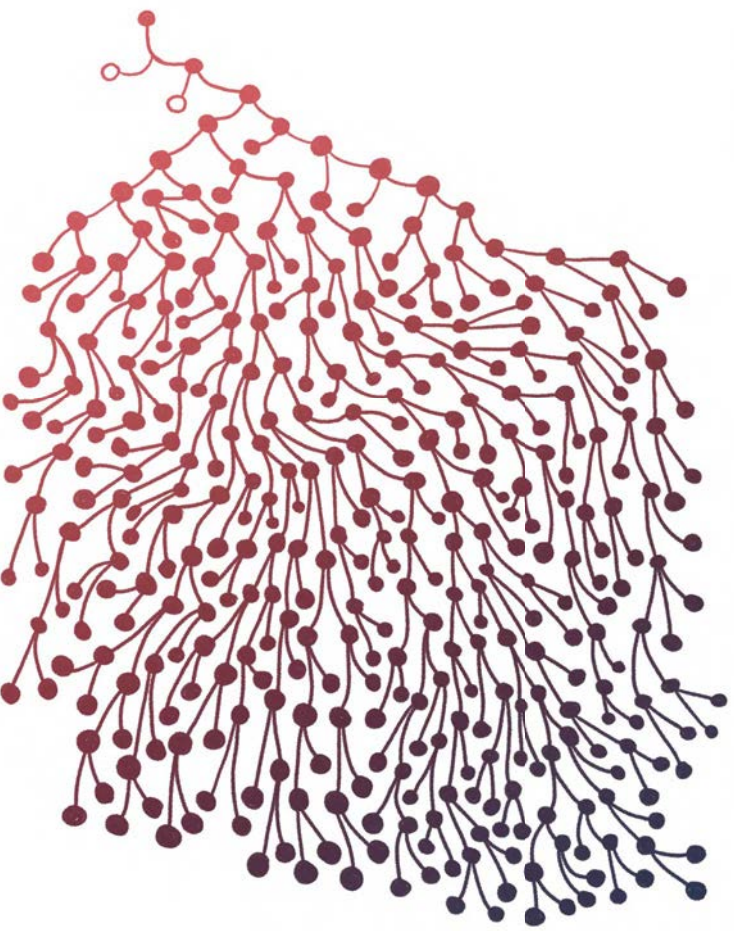


I often feel like I'm not enough ...

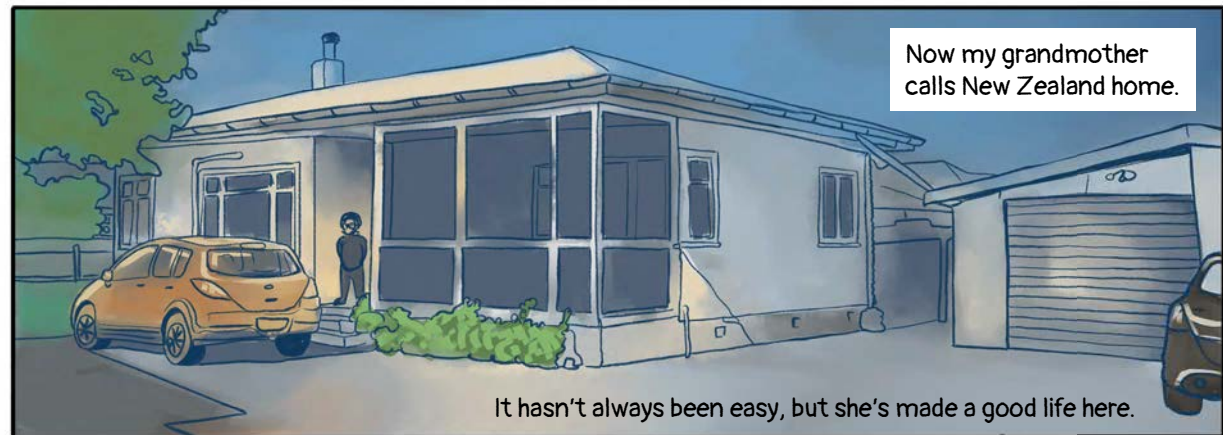


as if the dilution of my blood makes me less somehow.

But that's not how heritage works. I can trace my lineage back over a thousand years ...



to a shrine in a little bamboo town my grandmother once called home.



Now my grandmother calls New Zealand home.

It hasn't always been easy, but she's made a good life here.



I tell her about my efforts to learn about Japan.



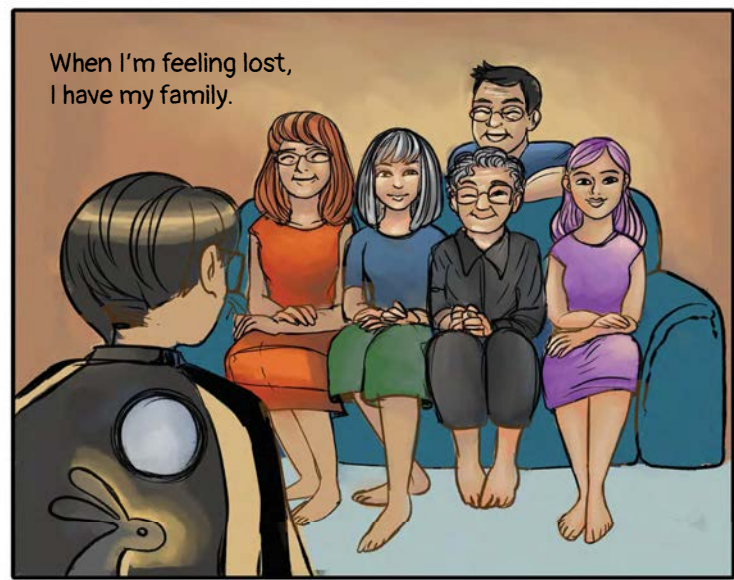
She encourages me to read more Japanese.



I'm learning.



I'm trying.



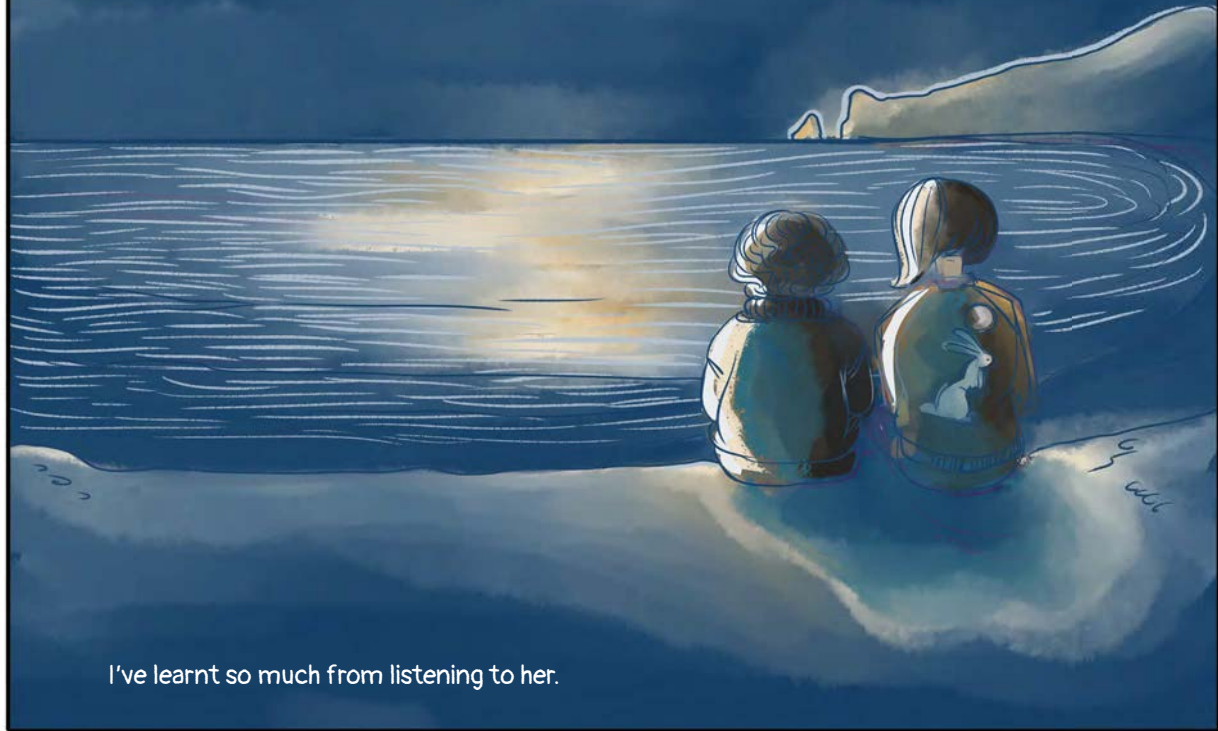
When I'm feeling lost, I have my family.



And I have my grandmother.



My grandmother is proud of being Japanese,
and she's proud of her life in New Zealand.



I've learnt so much from listening to her.

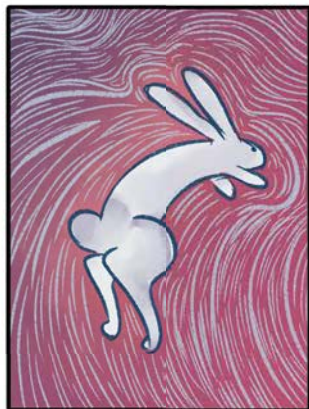
She's taught me that
my heritage is a living
part of me ...



something moving
and alive ...



a thing to pursue.



Something Alive

by Jem Yoshioka

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Curriculum learning areas	English Social Sciences
Reading year level	Year 8
Keywords	art, Basho, belonging, comic, culture, family, fitting in, genes, grandparents, graphic novel, haiku, heritage, identity, Japan, Japanese, managing self, mixed-race, parents, racism, symbolism