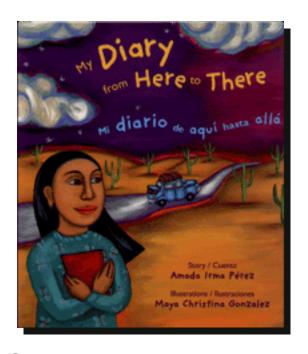
READING COMMUNITIES: CBP TEACHER'S GUIDES

My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá

Written by **Amada Irma Pérez** Illustrated by **Maya Christina Gonzalez**



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá

My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá gently explores one family's process of traveling, waiting, working, and hoping as they immigrate from northern Mexico to Los Angeles, California. The story stresses the closeness of the family's friends and relatives as they work their way north and west, as well as the positive growth that can come from such a stressful change as leaving one's home, community, and country. The form of the book—a young girl's journal—highlights this personal journey and explores how personal writing can be a means of understanding oneself and conquering one's fears, as well as coming to know oneself. Each of Amada's diary entries marks an important point along the journey she takes, with the support of her family.

Author Amada Irma Pérez offers her own personal experience of leaving her home in Ciudad Juárez as a little girl, and artist Maya Christina Gonzalez intimately renders the details of family life on both sides of the border. Through diary entries and paintings, readers come to know the tight-knit communities and physical landscapes of northern Mexico and California. This story will resonate with students who have faced a major change such as moving, starting a new school, or traveling to a new place with or without their family. It will resonate with teachers as well, as they integrate the book into studies of Mexico, immigration, journal-writing—and learning to face your fears.

Because My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá tells the true story of one family's journey to the United States, it can not describe all the different shapes that immigration takes. As a resource for discussion of immigration, it is best used in the context of a larger unit of study of many immigrant stories. We recommend that you use it together with other books

that describe alternative paths to the United States, such as Friends from the Other Side / Amigos del otro lado.

COMMUNITY: Mexican American

THEMATIC UNITS

Crossing Borders: Immigration; Citizenship; U.S. / Mexican Geography

Adjusting to Change: New Schools; New Communities; Family Networks

Personal Narratives: Journals; Letters; Autobiographies

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Amada Irma Perez is a third-grade teacher in Oxnard, California, and a leading advocate of programs encouraging multicultural understanding. Like many of her students, Amada Irma was born in Mexico and came to the United States as a young child. Amada Irma based My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá on her own journey across the border as a girl with her large family. In Amada Irma's first book, My Very Own Room / Mi proprio cuartito she dealt with the issues she faced living in a small space with her large family. "My parents," she wrote, "wanted to provide us with more space, but they could not. However, they taught us strong values, supported our education, and insisted that we become bilingual . . . [Today,] we are all committed to improving the lives of those who are struggling with the realities of poverty or adjusting to a new and different life." My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito won the Tómas Rivera Award and the Américas Honor Award, among others. Amada Irma Pérez lives with her husband and children in Ventura, California.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Born outside of Los Angeles and raised in Oregon, Maya Christina Gonzalez is one of the most promising young painters in the San Francisco Bay Area. My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá is her eighth book for Children's Book Press. Most recently, she also illustrated Iguanas in the Snow and Other Winter Poems / Iguanas en la nieve y otros poemas de invierno, her fourth and final book in a series with prominent Chicano poet Francisco X. Alarcón. She was also the artist for Amada Irma Pérez's first book, My Very Own Room. Her work has been praised by reviewers as "lively" and "so bountiful it feels as if it's spilling off the pages." Maya's top reviews, though, come from her students. A long-time participant in Children's Book Press Community Programs, Maya serves as artist-inresidence at several Bay Area elementary schools. Through her innovative workshops, Maya helps students express their visions of the world — and themselves. "By beginning with self-portraits," Maya says, "art is immediately marked as something that is your own, very personal, very true. How can this be wrong? It is me!"

GETTING THE CLASSROOM READY

Picture the Journey



Related books; map of the United States and Mexico; photographs from magazines

- 1. Dedicate a corner of your classroom to a library reflecting the themes of *My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá*. Put books related to Mexico and immigration in milk crates near your reading center. You may also wish to include books in diary form, such as the *Dear America* series.
- 2. Create a bulletin board that illustrates Amada's journey. Feature a large map of the United States and Mexico. Cut out pictures from magazines that illustrate key features of the two countries and put them up at appropriate places on the map. Images might include saguaro cactus, grapes in California's Central Valley, traditional Mexican foods, or photographs of cities in the United States or Mexican.

GETTING READY FOR READING

Dear Diary

Students prepare for My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá by discussing their own experiences with diaries.



20 minutes



whole class

CA Language Arts Standard 2.3: Students ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in and inferred from the text.

- 1. Introduce the book to your students by talking with them about diaries. (If your class is Spanish bilingual, remind students that in Spanish, *diario* means both newspaper and diary—a book you write your thoughts and feeling in.) If appropriate, describe the first time you wrote in a diary or tell the students about a diary you kept as a child.
- 2. Elicit responses from students about their own diaries: What do they write about? How often do they write? How is writing a diary entry special? Do they write in their diaries when they're happy? When they're sad?
- 3. Explain to the students that they're going to read a book that's an autobiography—a story that the author wrote about her own life. But this autobiography is written like a diary—it's as if the author decided to tell us this life story by letting us read what she wrote in her diary.

EXPLORING THE BOOK

Diving In



30 minutes



Whole class

CA Language Arts Standard 2.4: Students make and modify predictions about forthcoming information.

Introduce the book to students in a large or small group. The focus of this first reading should be reading for pleasure—encouraging students to enjoy the beauty of the book and the story it tells. In order to foster this enjoyment, try some of the following activities:

- Encourage the class to explore the book first by taking a "picture walk" through the book, thinking about the story as it is told in the illustrations. Have students pair up and discuss what they see in the illustrations as you turn the pages of the book in front of them. At the end of the picture walk, ask the students to share one thing that they observed in the illustrations.
- Once they've shared their observations about the book, ask students what story they think the book tells. List your students' predictions.
- Read sections aloud to the large group, or have students read the book on their own, in pairs, or in small groups. As students are reading, stop them occasionally to check their predictions and to make new ones. Once the reading is complete, return to the list of predictions and alter it as necessary.

FIRST TIME AROUND: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Meaning in Context

Students practice strategies to understand the meanings of new words—words that are in Spanish and English or words that are related to immigration.



30 minutes



whole class

CA Reading Standard 1.0: Students use sentence and word context, as well as the dictionary, to learn the meaning of unknown words.



Flipchart and markers

- 1. Ask students what words they didn't know when they first looked at or listened to the book. Ask how they were able to figure out what those words mean. Use a flip chart to list the strategies they brainstorm, including:
 - looking at the pictures
 - looking at the word in context
 - using the dictionary
 - asking a friend
 - asking a heritage Spanish speaker or consulting a Spanish-English dictionary (in the case of defining unfamiliar words in Spanish)
- 2. Apply these strategies to the non-English words in the English text. Point out that, in the English text, sometimes words are in italics—these words are in Spanish. For your reference, words from the Spanish that appear in the English text are:
 - p. 6—tortilla
 - p. 11—*m'ija*
 - p. 13—*saguaro*
 - p. 14—tamales, pan dulce
 - p. 17—*medalla*, *tío*
 - p. 20—tía

- 3. After students read the book individually, ask them what new words they found and what strategies they used to figure them out. Add any new strategies to the flipchart and post the list in your classroom.
- 4. Point out to students that there is another group of words that might be unfamiliar to them in the book—words related to immigration. Even if students have seen or heard these words before, they might not know exactly what they mean. As a class, discuss the scene at the border on pages 24–25. Talk with your students about what a border / frontera is: an invisible line separating two countries. Ask them what they know about crossing borders. Are borders important? Why or why not? As you lead this conversation, be mindful that students may have their own personal knowledge of immigration; respect their experiences and remember that this topic might be difficult for some members of your class. Words and concepts to discuss include:
 - Citizen / ciudadano (p. 16): The people waiting at the border are not citizens, and that is why it is difficult for them to enter the country. A person who is a citizen / ciudadano of a country usually lives there and has certain rights there, such as voting.
 - "Green Card" / tarjeta verde (p. 16): You can live in a country without being a citizen. One way to do that in the United States is to have a "green card" / tarjeta verde, a card that says that you legally have the right to live and work in the United States. Some people come to a country and become citizens or get green cards later.
 - Immigration / inmigración; immigration patrol / patrulla fronteriza (p. 26): When people leave one country to live in another, it's called immigration / inmigración. In the United States, the immigration patrol / patrulla fronteriza (often called "la migra") tries to keep people out of the country if they don't have the documents the government requires.

SECOND TIME AROUND: READING COMPREHENSION

Mapping the Story

Using a map of the U.S. / Mexican border, students summarize and retell the events of My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá.



1 hour



whole class and small groups

CA Language Arts Standard 2.4 and 2.6: Students recall major points in the text and extract appropriate and significant information from the text.



Large map of the United States and Mexico; pushpins; string or yarn

- 1. Post a map featuring the U.S. / Mexican border in your classroom and tell your students that you're going to retrace Amada's journey on it. Have students identify the points on the journey (marked with purple stars), using the map on the back of the book.
- 2. Ask students to locate the seven cities on the class map. Mark those cities with pushpins and connect them to each other with a piece of string or yarn.
- 3. Break the class into seven groups (either pairs, threes, or fours). Assign each group one city on the route. Ask the groups to summarize in two or three sentences on index cards the major events that occur in their assigned cities.
- 4. Beginning with Ciudad Juárez, have a representative from each group post the index cards near the appropriate city on the map. Ask the representatives to read their cards out loud, so that the group as a whole retells the events of the story.

AFTERWORDS: LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Learning, Changing, Growing

Students describe the main character from My Diary from Here to There | Mi diario de aquí hasta allá and discuss how she changed throughout the course of the book.



1 hour



Small groups and whole class

CA Language Arts Standard 3.3 and 3.4: Students determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them. Students determine the underlying theme or author's message in fiction text.



Character Change (at the end of this document); blackboard and chalk

- 1. Tell the class that in any story, there are many ways to know what a character is like. What does she say? What does she do? How does she feel? What does she look like in the illustrations?
- 2. Break up the class into small groups of three or four students each, then distribute the Character Change Worksheets. Each group should fill out the worksheet together, using adjectives and phrases to describe Amada at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Tell the groups that it's okay to repeat words or phrases—if something is true in the beginning, it might still be true in the end. But it might be different, so they should pay attention to that, too.
- 3. Ask each group to share one of Amada's characteristics from the beginning of the story. Tell the class to listen carefully to the other groups and to avoid repeating words that other groups have used. Then, repeat the process with the middle and the end of the story.
- 4. Ask the class what changes they saw in Amada over time. List the responses students give on the blackboard so they can see them. Ask: What does Amada learn? What do you think she is trying to tell us?

LANGUAGE ARTS

From Your Diary to the World

Students practice keeping daily journals that reflect their experiences. They select one journal entry to transform into personal narratives and share with the class.



20-30 minutes a day, over the course of three weeks



individual

CA Writing Standard 1.0 and 2.0: Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process. Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences.



Journals or small notebooks for every student; pens and pencils

Plan

- Explain to students that they, like Amada, can keep diaries. Every day the class will be writing in their diaries or journals for twenty minutes. Distribute one journal or small notebook to each student. (If necessary, create these journals from pieces of folded paper stapled together, or designate one section of students' regular notebooks as the journal.)
- Tell the class that, just like Amada's, their diaries are private—they don't have to share everything they've written. But they do have to write daily, and they will eventually choose *one* piece of writing to share with the class. Remind students that just because they're not moving doesn't mean that they have nothing to say. As a class, brainstorm a list of things they might want to write about in their diaries.
- Put aside twenty minutes of regular diary time each day. Good times for this kind of writing are often at the beginning or end of the day.

Draft

- After two weeks, tell the class that their diaries can be great sources for their regular writing. Of course, you don't always want to share exactly what you've written in your diary with other people. Ask the students to look through their diaries and select an entry that they think might be a good story to share.
- Once students have selected their entries, have them write first drafts of stories based on their selections. Remind the students that their diaries are the starting places—the entries describe

what happened and their feelings. But when they share a story with others, they need to think about how to explain the events to people who weren't there. They will have to use details and sensory imagery to make the reader see, hear, and feel what happened.

Revise

Ask students to share their first drafts in pairs and give each other feedback. Have them use
that feedback to revise their work, creating second drafts. Tell students that the questions
their partners ask about the story should help them figure out where they need to do more
work.

Edit

• Ask students to edit their second drafts for publication, checking spelling and punctuation. Read through the drafts and mark errors. Encourage students to use a word wall, a dictionary, or other classroom reference tools as they correct their work.

Publish

 Publish the stories by posting them in the classroom and having students read them aloud to the class.

OTHER WRITING ACTIVITIES

• Writing Home: Point the class to the letter from Amada's father on page 19. Ask students to remember—or imagine—a time when they were far away from a loved one. What stories would they tell? How would they feel? Have them write letters to their family members from that point of view.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Other Side / El Otro Lado

Students study the geography and government of Mexico, comparing it to the United States.



2 hours, over the course of several days



whole group

CA Social Studies Standard 3.1: Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps and tables to organize information about people, places, and environments.



Map of the U.S. and Mexico; flipchart and markers; encyclopedias and other reference tools

- 1. Amada worries that the United States will be very different from Mexico. Ask students what they know about Mexico from the book. Encourage them to look at both the illustrations and the words. Elicit information from the class about the country: its location (next to the United States), climate (there are deserts there, but also green parks), and the languages they speak (Spanish and indigenous languages).
- 2. Ask the class what else they know about Mexico. How big is it? What kind of government does it have? How is Mexico different from the United States?
- 3. Tell the class that you're going to learn more about Mexico by comparing it to the United States. Using a flipchart and markers, create a table comparing key features of geography and government—emphasize those aspects that you wish students to best understand. One table might look like this:

	Mexico	United States
Şize		
Climate		
Government		
Languages spoken		

4. Have students fill in the information they already know and research the remaining information using the class map, encyclopedias, or the Internet (see the *Resources* list for recommended websites). Once the chart is complete, ask students: How different do they think the two countries are?

OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

- Words of Change: On page 19, Amada's father writes to the family about "new words like unions, strikes, and boycotts." If students are not familiar with these concepts, ask them to define these words with a dictionary and to research more about César Chávez, the man who spoke them.
- Modes of Transportation: In My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá, Amada and her family travel by car and bus. They end up living right near many airplanes and trains. Ask your class to consider the advantages and disadvantages of these different modes of transportation. Encourage them to take into account issues such as cost, speed, and convenience.

ART

A Story without Words

Students create wordless picture books that tell the stories of their own journeys.



1.5 hours



individual

CA Visual Arts Standard 2.4: Students create artwork based on the observation of objects and scenes in daily life.



8.5" by 11" white paper; stapler; colored pencils

- 1. Remind your class that in a picture book, the story is told as much through the illustrations as through the words. Look at how Maya Christina Gonzalez's pictures for *My Diary from Here to There | Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* tell the story in scenes, so that you can see in the images the stages of Amada's journey. The students are going to have the chance to make their own book one that tells the story of a family trip with pictures instead of words.
- 2. Ask students to think of a trip they took. It could be a big trip, such as to another state or country, or just a short trip, such as to a friend's house or even to the grocery store. What happened? What made it memorable? Tell students that their books will have three scenes each, plus the front and back covers. The only words will be the title and the name of the artist on the front cover. Have students think about how to share stories of their trips in three scenes. Point out that there are different ways to choose their scenes. Options include the beginning, middle, and end of the trip; the time spent traveling, arriving at the destination, and what happened once you're there; or making the decision to go, what you do once you're there, and returning home.
- 3. Once students have chosen their scenes, give them "books" made of three sheets of paper folded in half and stapled together. Have students use colored pencils to illustrate their scenes and an appropriate front and back cover. Encourage students to take a minute to plan their images before they jump in with the colored pencils. They can sketch out their ideas for each scene in small boxes ("thumbnail sketches") on a piece of scrap paper or they can outline their figures lightly in regular pencil to help them make final decisions about what to draw where.

OTHER ART ACTIVITIES

• Playing with Color: Maya Christina Gonzalez loves to use surprising colors to represent everyday images. Look at the people in My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá—they often have green or purple lines highlighting their features. The grass seems to be red below the green, and the roads are almost purple. Encourage your class to play with color in their own art, layering surprising combinations on top of each other to draw familiar things in new ways. Oil and chalk pastels are wonderful media for this kind of experimentation.

MATH

Are We There Yet?

Students use maps to understand the concept of scale and to calculate the distance Amada and her family travel.



1 hour



whole class and individual

CA Math Standard 2.0: Students calculate and solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.



Map of the United States and Mexico; pushpins and string; ruler

- 1. Remind students that real maps are drawn to scale—they represent distance using a ratio, such as one inch equals five miles. If you want to figure out how big something is on a map, you need to multiply it using the map's scale.
- 2. Using a piece of string, ask a student to trace the route that Amada and her family traveled on your map. Make sure to have the student trace the actual route that the family took, rather than a straight line from Ciudad Juárez to Los Angeles. Ask the student to measure the length of the piece of string in inches. Model for the class the process you would use to figure how far the trip is in miles, explaining that to find the real distance you multiple the number of inches on the map by the ratio of miles to inches.
- 3. Now, ask another student to use the string to measure the distance between each point on the journey. Once you have a list of those measurements in inches, ask students to individually calculate the distance between each point.
- 4. Once the students have finished their calculations, have them check their work. Point out to the class that when you add up the distance of all the trip segments, your answer should equal the total distance of the trip as a whole.
- 5. Finally, ask students to look at the map once again. If there were a road that went directly from Ciudad Juárez to Los Angeles, what would it look like? Allow students to experiment

with different routes, using the piece of string, until they understand the shortest route between the two points would be a straight line. Have the class calculate that distance. How much longer is the route taken by Amada and her family?

OTHER MATH ACTIVITIES

• *Miles and Kilometers*: To extend the map activity above, have students explore the relationships between the metric and the U.S. system of measurement. Students can recalculate the distances in metric units, using the scale on the map to figure out the ratio of centimeters and miles. Or, they can convert the miles directly to kilometers, multiplying their previous answers by 1.6.

SCIENCE

Fly Away

Students study the life cycles and migration patterns of the monarch butterfly.



1.5 hours



whole group

CA Science Standard 3.0: Students know that adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival.



flipchart and markers; encyclopedias and online resources (see <u>Resources</u> for suggestions)

- If your students have not already noted them, point out the butterflies in the book's illustrations. Ask why they think butterflies might belong in this story. Write their ideas on a piece of chart paper.
- Tell the class that they will be learning more about one particular kind of butterfly, so that they can understand why they're in the story. Begin your research by making a KWL (know, want to know, learn) chart—a chart that records what students know about a topic, what they want to find out, and what they've learned. Ask your students what they already know about butterflies.

What we know | What we want to find out | What we learned | Pretty | Start out as | caterpillars |

- Once you've added all that students know about the topic to the chart, ask them what questions they have about butterflies. Write these questions in the second column of the chart.
- Tell students they're going to learn more about the monarch butterfly. Give the class a short text about monarch butterflies' lifecycles and migration patterns. (See the *Resources* list for recommendations of online sources, or use an encyclopedia.) Once they have read the text, ask students what they've learned. Can they answer their questions? Start by recording the answers in the third column, and then ask the students to share other interesting facts they learned.
- There will, of course, be questions that the students' first reading has not answered. Encourage them to do additional reading to locate the answers to these questions. You can break them up into small groups to research particular questions or to read selected sources.
- Once the students' research is complete, ask them: Why does it matter that butterflies change their form? How does this help them? What is the role of migration in their survival? Direct the class once more to their initial ideas about why butterflies make sense in the book's illustrations. Do they still think those ideas make sense? What similarities do they see between Amada and butterflies?

OTHER SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

• Plants and their Environments: In My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá, we see Amada in a range of natural settings. In the park, she is surrounded by grass and trees. In the desert, she notices the saguaro cacti along the route. Why do different plants grow in different climates? What does it mean if a plant is indigenous to a region? Have your class explore these questions in a scientific research project.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

- Ask students who are "experts"—who have immigrated themselves—if they would like to share their knowledge and experience as they relate to the story. Children's experiences in coming to the United States may vary; be sensitive to the fact that some students may not wish to share. Discuss the connections between your students' experiences and that of the characters in the book.
- If your students, or your students' families, are from Mexico, draw on their knowledge of the country's society and culture as much as possible. Even though this knowledge may not be formal, students bring a familiarity that can deeply enrich activities such as the Social Studies comparison of the two countries.
- Partner heritage speakers of Spanish and English whenever possible, and encourage them to explore differences in reading and writing the two languages.

RESOURCES

Related Books from Children's Book Press

My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito. Story by Amada Irma Pérez and illustrations by Maya Christina Gonzalez.

Books about Immigrant Life from Children's Book Press

Aekyung's Dream. Story and pictures by Min Paek.

Calling the Doves / El canto de las palomas. Story by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrations by Elly Simmons.

Family Pictures / Cuadros de familia. Words and pictures by Carmen Lomas Garza.

Friends from the Other Side / Amigos del otro lado. Story by Gloria Anzaldúa and illustrations by Consuelo Mendez.

In My Family / En mi familia. Words and pictures by Carmen Lomas Garza.

A Movie in My Pillow / Una película en mi almohada. Poems by Jorge Argueta and illustrations by Elizabeth Gómez.

The Upside Down Boy / El niño de cabeza. Story by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrations by Elizabeth Gómez.

Books About Life in Mexico from Children's Book Press

From the Bellybutton of the Moon / Del ombligo de la luna y otros poemas de verano. Poems by Francisco X. Alarcón and illustrations by Maya Christina Gonzalez.

Where Fireflies Dance / Ahí, donde bailan las luciérnagas. Story by Lucha Corpi and illustrations by Mira Reisberg.

Web sites:

- For a comprehensive library of maps and online map resources, go to the *Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection* at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html
- For information on Mexico, try the *Mexico for Kids* site at http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to choose a language for the site, which is full of information about the country's history, government, and ecology.
- The *Yahooligans* website includes a wide range of informational sites for kids about Monarch butterflies and their lifecycles. Look in the "butterflies and moths" section of the "science and nature" category, or go to http://www.yahooligans.com/science_and_nature/living_things/animals/invertebrates/arthropods/insects/Butterflies and Moths/
- The *Monarchs and Migration* page includes information about the butterflies from many perspectives, activities for students, and a recommended links page for more information. It's at http://www.smm.org/sln/monarchs/top.html

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Lucero is a teacher at Fairmount Elementary School in San Francisco. She has been developing thematic units for Fairmount's two-way Spanish immersion program for several years. A participant in Children's Book Press workshops for teachers, Nancy shared her expertise in literacy instruction with us as we developed this guide.

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Please share your own ideas for how to use *My Diary from Here to There | Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* in the classroom. We'll be pleased to post your work on the website for other teachers to use. We would also love to see any outstanding examples of student work resulting from these activities. Email us your lesson plans or student work samples at communityprograms@cbookpress.org.

Amada Irma in My Diary from Here to There

	The Beginning (pages 2-3)	The Middle (pages 16-17)	The End (pages 30-31)
One characteristic:	,		,
How we know:			
One characteristic:			
How we know:			
One characteristic:			
How we know:			
One characteristic:			
How we know:			