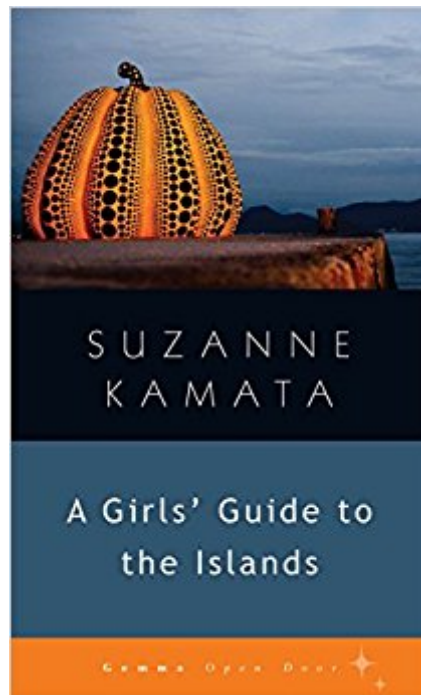


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# A Girls' Guide To The Islands (Gemma Open Door)



## Synopsis

The American writer Suzanne Kamata had lived in Japan for more than half of her life, yet she had never explored the small nearby islands of the Inland Sea. The islands, first made famous by Donald Richie's *The Inland Sea* 50 years ago, are noted for displaying artwork created by prominent, and sometimes curious, international artists and sculptors: Naoshima's wealth of museums, including one devoted to 007, Yayoi Kusama's polka dot pumpkins, Kazuo Katase's blue teacup, and a monster rising out of a well on the hour in Sakate, called "Anger at the Bottom of the Sea" to name a few. Spurred by her teen-aged daughter Lilia's burgeoning interest in art and adventure, Kamata sets out to show her the islands' treasures. Mother and daughter must confront several barriers on their adventure. Lilia is deaf and uses a wheelchair. It is not always easy to get onto -- or off of -- the islands, not to mention the challenges of language, culture, and a generation gap. *A Girls' Guide to the Islands* takes the reader on a rare visit by a unique mother and daughter team. (P O'Hare Gemma Open door for Literacy)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Heart-lifting and inspiring, *A Girls' Guide to the Islands* explores the restorative and often-unexpected way that travel breeds connection not only with the world around us, but within ourselves and most importantly each other." --Nicole Trilivas, author of *Girls Who Travel* (Nicole Trilivas Gemma Open Door for Literacy) Touring art museums with a teenager may not sound like everyone's idea of a good time, and at the beginning of this pocket-sized

memoir, Shikoku-based writer Suzanne Kamata finds herself wondering how she can renege on a promise to take her daughter to a Yayoi Kusama art exhibit in Osaka. Traveling for the duo is fraught with more than the typical difficulties: Kamata, an American, uses sign language to communicate with her daughter, who copes with hearing challenges and gets around by wheelchair. However, after the Osaka trip is successful, Kamata vows to take advantage of her daughter's burgeoning interest in art and embarks on a mother-daughter odyssey to visit some of the stunning exhibits scattered around the islands of Japan's Inland Sea. In the process the pair build more than memories, as seeing things through her daughter's eyes is a catalyst for new discoveries and self-reflection for the author. Meanwhile, her daughter emerges as a character in her own right, as colorful as Kusama's famous dotted pumpkins. This book offers multiple perspectives that would appeal to anyone interested in travel, art, accessibility issues or parent-teen relationships. Kamata's style is as fresh and breezy as the winds that whip the islands she writes about. As the book closes, Kamata offers the bittersweet observance that her daughter, now in her mid-teens, is gravitating more toward friends than family, making Kamata all the more glad she made the effort to travel together. Kamata's fans are likely to be grateful, too. (Louise George Kittaka *The Japan Times*)

"A Girls' Guide to the Islands follows author Suzanne Kamata's journey with her daughter, Lilia, into the remote realm of the Seto Inland Sea's world-class art collection. Beautiful in its directness and honesty, *A Girls' Guide* examines the nature of accessibility and independence as Kamata and Lilia face challenges physical, emotional and artistic. The trip yields unexpected, occasionally amusing adventures as the two women explore new landscapes as well as their own changing relationship." --Kelly Luce, author of *Pull Me Under* (Kelly Luce *Gemma Open Door for Literacy*)

Suzanne Kamata is the author of the award-winning young adult novel *Gadget Girl: The Art of Being Invisible*, and the author or editor of a range of books. Originally from Michigan, she now lives in Tokushima, Japan, with her family, and teaches EFL at Tokushima University. Suzanne holds an MFA from the University of British Columbia. (Gemma Open Door for Literacy *Gemma Open Door for Literacy*)

Loved this little book! The island refer to the islands of Japan (specifically, the Shikoku area.) It's about American writer Suzanne Kamata and her daughter (who uses a wheelchair and is hearing impaired) taking trips to art museums. I don't know much about this part of Japan, so found it really interesting to learn about it. And also from Suzanne and her daughter's point of view: for example,

they stay in their car during ferry rides because (while other people enjoy the scenery from the upper deck) because there is no wheelchair access to the upper deck. Lilia reminds me so much of my son! I guess kids are alike everywhere.....

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