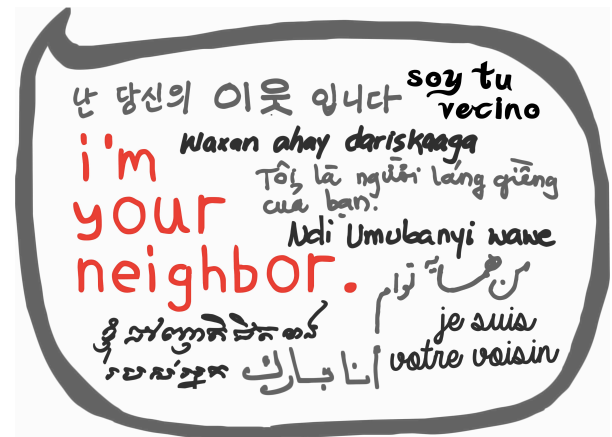


Thank you for reading this *I'm Your Neighbor, Portland* book.

"The true meeting takes place when the book opens, and a stranger reads about — and comprehends — a stranger." —Amit Majmudar, author of *The Abundance*.

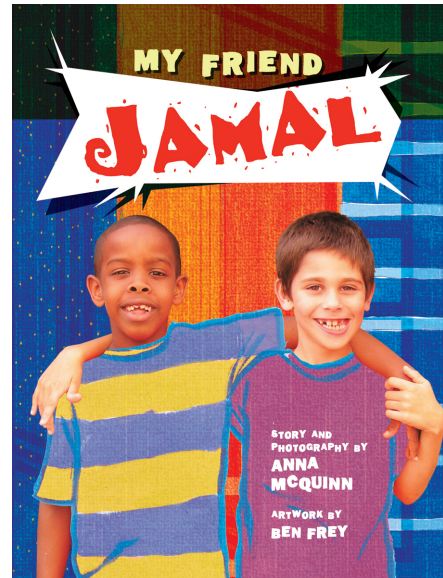
We hope that this book has introduced you to some of your neighbors' stories and as Amit Majmudar said, allowed you to "comprehend a stranger."



Discuss

Consider exploring these questions after reading *My Friend Jamal* by Anna McQuinn.

- Joseph and Jamal are best friends. Think about your friends. What kinds of things do you have in common? Do you like the same foods or like the same subjects in school? How are they different from you? Do you play different sports or celebrate different holidays?
- Joseph says that Jamal's house smells different than his because Jamal's mom cooks with special spices. When you go over to a friend's house, what are the things that are different than from your home? Does your friend's family eat different foods than you?
- Jamal's mom puts bananas in their spaghetti, which Joseph thinks is strange but says that it tastes really good. When have you tried a new food? Did you like it? Have you ever introduced a friend to a new kind of food?
- When Joseph goes over to Jamal's house, they play superheroes. When they are at Joseph's house, they play basketball. What kinds of things do you do with your friends' house? Do you like to do different things when they visit your house?
- When they grow up, Joseph and Jamal dream about playing on the same basketball team, living together in a big house and drive big cars. What do you and your friends dream about doing when you grow up? Do you have similar dreams? Do you hope to live near them when you're older?



- Jamal says he will learn to read Arabic when he's older, and his mom knows how to speak Somali, Arabic and Italian. Do you know how to read or speak another language? What language would you want to learn and why?
- When Joseph meets Jamal's aunt, he notices that she dresses differently than Jamal's mom and he learns that you don't have to wear Somali clothes to be Somali. Are there clothes that you wear that show who you are or where you're from? Do you wear these clothes all the time, or just at special events?
- Jamal helps his mom learn how to use the computer. Have you ever helped your parents learn something new? Was it strange helping them instead of them helping you?

Explore

Somalia is an East African country situated in the Horn of Africa. It was once under Italian rule in the 1800s, which is why Jamal and his family eat spaghetti. Somalia gained its independence in 1960.

Violence began in the late 1980s when rebel groups in Somalia began challenging the leader Siad Barre. Many of the rebels were angry at the way he was running the country. The rebels succeeded in overthrowing Barre in 1991, but no new government or leader was appointed. Violence between warring tribes and with neighboring countries Ethiopia and Djibouti led to the death of thousands of Somalis and forced many to flee the country, usually to refugee camps in Kenya. The situation was only made worse by multiple severe droughts throughout the 2000s that led to famine and starvation.

Somali refugees have found new homes in countries throughout the world, such as South Africa, England, the United States and Canada. The Somalis living in Maine are mostly secondary migrants who were initially resettled in low-income neighborhoods in large urban cities such as Atlanta, Georgia, but decided to leave due to high rates of crime, drug and gang activity in these areas. They fear for the safety of their families and move to states like Maine, to reunify with relatives, friends, and community members who live here and commend Maine's safe communities, schools, and affordable housing. Secondary migrants come to Maine for the same reasons that many other groups of new residents do. They come here for, "The way life should be."

Engage

VIEW a photo essay of the Somali immigrants around the world. **The Somali Documentary Project** uses photography and writing to document the worldwide Somali diaspora

www.somaliproject.org

TASTE East African cooking. **Asmara Restaurant** on 51 Oak St in Portland, ME serves Ethiopian cuisine.

SHOP at East African groceries. **Safari Grocery and Restaurant** at 30 Washington Street, **Al-Amin Halal Market** at 269 St John St and **Discount Halal Market** at 44 Washington Ave in Portland, ME serve East African and Middle Eastern foods and spices.

VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT Maine based organizations helping Somali communities

United Somali Women of Maine based in Lewiston assists refugees and immigrant women living in Maine, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services and promoting a non-sexist, multicultural environment.

<http://www.uswofmaine.org/>

Somali Culture and Development Association in Maine promotes the integration of Somali refugee, immigrant and American born children through providing services such as job assistance, transportation and youth activities.

<http://www.mesom.org/>

Somali Bantu Youth Association based in Lewiston provides literacy courses, interpretation services and youth programs for Somali youth and their families.

<http://sbyam.org/>

Tree Street Youth supports the youth of Lewiston-Auburn through academics, the arts, and athletics while providing a safe space that encourages healthy physical, social, emotional, and academic development while building unity across lines of difference.

www.treestreetyouth.com

Cultivating Community supports refugees and immigrants to become successful and sustainable farmers, who sell their produce under “Fresh Start Farms” at local farmer’s markets.

<http://www.cultivatingcommunity.org/nasap/nasap--fresh-start-farms.html>

Read

From *I Remember Warm Rain*

- “Promises” by Navid Sabeti

From *New Mainers*

- Laura Val, Romania
- Oscar Mokeme, Nigeria

Titles set among East African immigrants and refugees:

Ages 6-8

- *A Somali Alphabet* by Nadifo Ayanle (Set in Somali American community)
- *My Name is Sangoel* by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed (Set in Sudan and Sudanese America community)
- *The Color of Home* by Mary Hoffman (Set in Somalia and Somali America community)
- *Brothers in Hope* by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed (Set in South Sudan and Sudanese America community)
- *The Night You Were Born, Cherished One* by Various (Set in Maine Somali American community)

Ages 13+

- *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* by Jan Cotes (Set in South Sudan and Sudanese Canadian community)
- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park (Set in Sudan)
- *Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate, Set in Sudan and Sudanese American community
- *Of Beetles and Angels* by Mawi Asgedom (Set in Ethiopia, Sudan and Ethiopia American community)
- *Out of Nowhere* by Maria Padian, An *I'm Your Neighbor Portland* featured book (Set in Somali American community)