

Traveling helps fuel author's creativity

By Jae-Ha Kim
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For "Dreamt I Found You" novelist Jimin Han, putting herself in different environments is a great way to channel her creativity.

"Traveling creates an energy that spurs me on to write," said Han, who also teaches at the Writing Institute at Sarah Lawrence College. "I notice more things than I do when I'm home. Right now, I'm sitting on a terrace in a hotel in Myeongdong in Seoul. Already, I've written on the flight and earlier this morning working on the new book. Fingers crossed I have another novel soon."

This interview with Han has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: What are you doing in South Korea?

A: I'm getting ready to take a bus to see a family member who is ill. Two years ago, I was here getting ready to travel to Namwon with my cousin to do research for "Dreamt I Found You." We had one night in Seoul before jumping on a train early the next morning. I never imagined I'd be back so soon.

Q: Do you think any of your characters would make good travel partners?

A: Dahee from "Dreamt I Found You," because she notices what you need without you saying it aloud and looks out for you. Chohui from "The Apology," because she, too, can adapt to situations and make the best of them. Readers keep asking me to write a sequel centered on Chohui, who loves to travel. Maybe someday she'll get



For novelist Jimin Han, her travels are an integral part of her writing process. **CHRISTINE PETRELLA**

her own story.

Q: What trips do you have planned so far?

A: I'll be in Cape Cod with my writers group. We've been going every summer for over a decade and it's so fun and inspiring. Two of us have a reading event at Harwich Port Library this time around with Below the Brine Bookshop selling copies. It's such a great week, because we each go off to write during the day and then take turns cooking dinner at night. There are 12 or more of us so there's always someone to walk into town with if you want company. Or if you want to be alone, there are so many places in the house or in town to work without interruption. You don't have to take care of anyone and no one has to take care of you.

Q: Have you been to a place that felt like a storybook setting?

A: Scarborough Beach in Narragansett is summer for me. Every summer until I was in high school, we'd drive to visit my aunt and uncle in Rhode Island. We'd spend the whole day there with giant coolers of food. There was no end time other than the sun setting and we could do whatever we wanted. I was never bored. It didn't feel like we were visiting the beach. It felt like it belonged to us, like we belonged there.

Q: Where have you eaten a

meal so delicious that you still think about it?

A: Perfect follow-up question! In Seoul near Namdaemun, I had the best jjajangmyeon (noodles with black bean sauce). I don't know if it's still there.

Q: What is your best or worst vacation memory?

A: Our close family friends arranged a trip to Italy one summer. They're the best planners and have been to so many places around the world. Our kids were around the same age, middle school at the time, which is a great age to take on vacation. They're old enough to be independent and young enough to want to be with their parents. ... So we started in Rome and then went to Umbria. We went on amazing day trips to small towns, beautiful markets, incredible food everywhere. We were about to travel on to Florence when we got word that our friends' very close extended family member was gravely ill, so our friends had to return to the U.S. ... They insisted we continue the trip, (saying) they'd feel terrible if we left early too. So we reluctantly went on to Florence and then Milan before flying home. Best and worst, that was the trip. I feel so lucky to have friends like them. Traveling together as families like that is really a rare gift.

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