**Geography and History of the World**

**By:** Robyn L. Johnson, IUPUI School of Education and Department of Geography

**Title:**  Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America

**Author:** Firoozeh (Julie) Dumas

**Author Information:** Dumas was born in 1965 in Abadan, Iran. She moved to California with her engineer father and traditional Iranian mother at the age of 7.

**Publishing Information:** Random House Trade Paperbacks, a division of Random House, Inc., New York. ISBN 13 #9780812968378.

**Theme:** A young Iranian girl’s struggle to integrate into western society and to preserve her culture.

**Number of Pages:** 198.

**Target Audience:** Preteens – older teens

**Brief Description:** In the first part of the book, the narrator tells of her move to Whittier, California and of her adventures integrating into a new school and community, while learning the English language. Firoozeh’s father, an engineer, harbors fond memories and aspirations about the American way of life, a life that he so desires for his family. Later on, Firoozeh’s parents begin to take regular holidays to Iran, where they are wealthy by local standards; while in Iran, her father lives a life of luxury and even donates to various local causes. Later, Firoozeh meets and marries a French man and her family completes their integration into the American melting pot.

**Major Points:** The book is a tale of a young girl’s struggles to integrate into American society and embrace her own Iranian culture.

**Your Opinion:** The book is both humorous and sensitive in its handling of cultural integration and is a great read for anyone with interest in the immigrant experience.

**Ideas for use in the Classroom:** The book is ideal for discussing the “Melting Pot” tradition of American culture; further, the book provides a great example of the immigrant experience in the United States and of being Middle Eastern in the West.