



SHOGAKUKAN
100th

Foreign Rights Guide

Spring 2023

FICTION

SHOGAKUKAN



From the past 100 years to the next 100 years.

Inspiring the power to create new ideas.

Shogakukan was founded in 1922 as a publisher of educational magazines for preschool and elementary school students. Having celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, Shogakukan has now established itself as a leading publisher of fiction, non-fiction, children's books, art, photography, travel guides, dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference books. Renowned for its long tradition and expertise in the publishing industry, Shogakukan also produces a wide range of other content in print, digital and audio form—comic books for children and adults, educational and entertainment magazines as well as websites and apps. The wealth of original content is further promoted through investment in film and TV productions, third-party adaptations, as well as extended reality (XR) projects. Honoring outstanding works with the Shogakukan Children, Comics and Non-Fiction Awards, Shogakukan aims to actively foster diversity, inclusion and accessibility and strives for the advancement of education and learning.



Company Name: SHOGAKUKAN Inc.
Headquarters: Tokyo, Japan
Founded: August 8, 1922
President: Nobuhiro Oga
Capital: 147 million yen
Sales: 105.7 billion yen (2021 fiscal year)
Employees: 687 (as of January 2023)

PLEASE CONTACT:

Shogakukan Inc.
2-3-1 Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 101-8001, JAPAN
www.shogakukan.co.jp

✉ rights_inquiry@shogakukan.co.jp

Contents

HIGHLIGHTS

[04](#)

Makoto Takayama [05](#)

Sayaka Murata et al. [07](#)

Sonoko Machida [08](#)

Akari Mikimoto [09](#)

Saki Murayama [10](#)

Gyatei Murasaki [11](#)

Yuko Yuzuki [12](#)

Tomihiko Morimi [13](#)

TRADE FICTION

[14](#)

LITERARY FICTION

[24](#)

CRIME & MYSTERY

[29](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



Category: Literary Fiction

ISBN: 978-4-09-407175-7

Pages: 192 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: August 2022

[English synopsis available on request.](#)

Egoist

Egoisuto / エゴイスト

Makoto Takayama

“Groundbreaking...Raw and immediate.” *Japan Times*

Heralded new film adaptation by Daishi Matsunaga

Highest critics’ ranking at the 2022 Tokyo International Film Festival

Three nominations at the 2023 Asian Film Awards

Kosuke, a wealthy fashion magazine editor with a close circle of artistic friends, becomes romantically entangled with his new personal trainer, Ryuta. Kosuke is dumbstruck when Ryuta abruptly breaks off the relationship, confessing that he is barely making ends meet and has been a sex worker since his teens to support his ailing single mother, Taeko. After much hesitation, Ryuta accepts a monthly stipend from Kosuke that allows him to quit his side hustle in exchange of two menial jobs. Taeko’s maternal attention seems like balm to Kosuke, who lost his mother at the age of 14 and grew up with his unemotional father in a conservative rural community. However, just as harmony seems to have been restored, tragedy strikes. Did Kosuke’s desire to rescue Ryuta and his mother drive them to the brink? Can love ever be authentic when it is driven by ego and self-interest? At a time in which LGBTQ+ rights in Japan are at the fore of public discourse, Makoto Takayama’s autobiographical novel is a much-needed investigation of economic disparity in contemporary Japan and the struggles sexual minorities face with family and finances in an unaccepting society.

Makoto Takayama graduated from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies with a bachelor’s degree in French. While working as an editor at a publishing company, he was also a prolific writer. His work mainly includes essays on love and interpersonal relationships, such as *Ai wa doku ka, doku ga ai ka* (Is Love Poison? Is Poison Love?) published by Kodansha in 2018. He died in 2020.



Category: Literary Fiction
 ISBN: 978-4-09-356745-9
 Pages: 416 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: December 2022
 Rights Sold: Korean, Thai, Vietnamese
 English synopsis available on request.

Disconnect

Zetsuen / 絶縁

Sayaka Murata, Alfian Sa'at, Hao Jingfang, Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa, Hon Lai Chu, Lhacham Gyal, Nguyen Ngoc Tu, Lien Ming Wei, Chung Serang

Against the backdrop of the global pandemic and the resurgence of war, nine Asian writers born between the late 1970s and early 1980s reflect on the increasing erosion of social cohesion in their countries and expose the shared nature of their experience of disconnectedness and isolation. This ambitious anthology, simultaneously published in Korean by Munhakdongne and in Japanese by Shogakukan, was led by science fiction writer Chung Serang (South Korea). It brings together a rich and diverse collection of short stories by Sayaka Murata (Japan), Alfian Sa'at (Singapore), Hao Jingfang (China), Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa (Thailand), Hon Lai Chu (Hong Kong), Lhacham Gyal (Tibet), Nguyen Ngoc Tu (Vietnam), and Lien Ming Wei (Taiwan) on the common theme of social isolation. At a time when heightened international tension and instability are breeding misinformation, stigmatization and hate speech, can these young voices be woven together to forge stronger bonds within the region?

"While all the writers were initially 'disconnected' from each other, the project provided a thread to link them, and readers, together...By using each other as a mirror [...], people can get to understand themselves in more detail." *Japan Times*

"Depicts a wide variety of topics, including loss and hope, the shape of the family, urban and social transformations...A collection of works with a great deal of power." *Asahi Shimbun*

"Explores what lies beyond the severance of bonds between people due to the pandemic and the intensification of international conflict." *Yomiuri Shimbun*

"Social isolation is an even more controversial topic in Asia, where culture is founded on its exact opposite, social interconnection. The gap between the 'self' and the 'other,' widened by the three-year pandemic and the precarious relationships between neighboring countries, is seen in this book through the sensitive eyes of a group of novelists...A unique anthology." *Hankyoreh*

Photo ©Bungeshurju



JAPAN

Nothingness

Mu (nothingness) is in vogue among young people and *mu-machi* (cities of nothingness), practicing this lifestyle, are built all over the world.

Sayaka Murata, born in 1979, is one of the most celebrated of the new generation of Japanese writers. She has won the Mishima Yukio Prize and the Akutagawa Prize, among other awards. Her many books include *Convenience Store Woman*, *Earthlings*, and *Life Ceremony*.



SINGAPORE

Wife

The life of a couple, long hoping for a child, is forever changed when the husband casually mentions the name of a former lover.

Alfian Sa'at, born in 1977, is a Singaporean author, playwright, poet, and translator. His plays have been read and performed internationally. He is currently the resident playwright of theater group WILD RICE. *Malay Sketches* is the first of his works to be available in the US.



CHINA

Positive Brick

In Positive City, buildings and furniture change color according to human emotions. Those who turn their surroundings black must be quarantined.

Hao Jingfang, born in 1984, is a Chinese science fiction writer. She won the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novelette for "Folding Beijing," translated by Ken Liu, the first Hugo awarded to a Chinese woman. *Vagabonds*, her first novel in English, was shortlisted for the 2021 Arthur C. Clarke Award.



THAILAND

Burning

Inspired by Lee Chang-dong's film, *Burning*, this is a love story set against the radicalization of the democracy movement in Bangkok.

Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa, born in 1978, is at the forefront of modern Thai writing with long, sometimes surreal collections of short stories reflecting the spirit of his generation, such as *Alphaville Hotel*, *A Tale Without a Name* or *A Damaged Utopia* (all available in English).



HONG KONG

The Secret Police

The secret police infiltrate a city kept under quarantine for the spread of a virus. Pets are prohibited, but cat-owners gather, candlelight in hand.

Hon Lai Chu, born in 1978, is an award-winning Hong Kong writer. She won the Hong Kong Biennial Award for Chinese Literature for fiction and her books have been twice named to the list of Top 10 Chinese Novels Worldwide. *The Kite Family* was published in English in 2015 by Hong Kong UP.



TIBET

A Snow Lotus Blooms Inside a Hole

After leaving an exploitative job in Beijing, the protagonist recalls the lie once told to a deceased childhood friend.

Lhacham Gyal, born in 1977, is a Tibetan author and scholar residing in Beijing. Deputy Director of the Religious Research Institute and president of the Tibetan Youth Society, he writes in both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. He is a five-time recipient of the prestigious *sbrang char* prize for Tibetan literature.



VIETNAM

Escape

A mother is about to die, lying on the bathroom floor. On the other side of the wall, her son is watching soccer on TV, but she hesitates to speak up.

Nguyen Ngoc Tu is a Vietnamese fiction writer born in 1977. Her most famous work, *The Endless Field*, won the Vietnam Writers' Association Award in 2006, the German Literaturpreis award at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2018 and has been adapted into a film.



TAIWAN

Aunt Sherith's Afternoon Tea

A local boy, the descendant of a British colonist and a black maid, and the son of an engineer gather in a secret place after table tennis.

Lien Ming Wei, born in 1983, taught Chinese for one year in the Philippines before beginning his career as a writer. He has won nearly every single important prize for literature in Taiwan, including the China Times and the Lin Rung-San Literary Awards.



SOUTH KOREA

Disconnect

Is the punishment for a man accused of harassment by six female broadcasters unfair or not? A heated debate divides two best friends...

Chung Serang was born in 1984. After working as an editor, she debuted as a writer in 2010 with a story in the SF magazine *Fantastique*. Her novel *School Nurse Ahn Eunyoung* was adapted into a Netflix series. Chung won the 2013 Changbi Prize for Fiction and the 2017 Hankook Ilbo Literary Award.



Category: Literary Fiction
 ISBN: 978-4-09-386645-3
 Pages: 368 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: May 2022
 Rights Sold: [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#)
[English synopsis and sample translation available on request.](#)

Sora's Recipes

Sora gohan / 宙ごはん

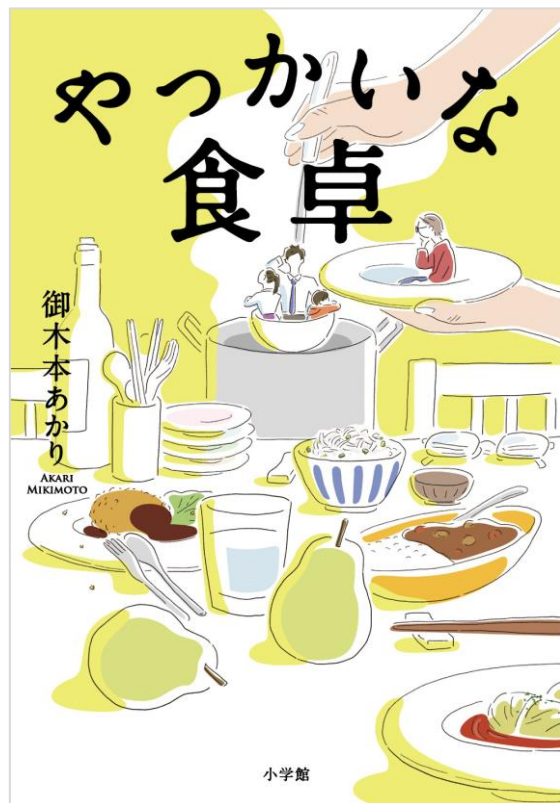
Sonoko Machida

Shortlisted for the 2023 Japan Booksellers' Award

Sora, from the Japanese word for "air," has two mothers, a birth mum and the mother who lovingly raised her until she had to move to Singapore due to her husband's job transfer. Before starting elementary school, Sora could not believe her luck at having two mothers. She did not live with Kano, her birth mum, but they met regularly and she was immensely proud of her beautiful looks, sweet disposition, and talent as an illustrator. However, when the mother who raised her moves abroad and Sora is forced to live with Kano, the situation drastically changes. When it comes to her work, Kano is considered a distinguished illustrator, but she has none of the qualities usually associated with a "normal mother." She is not particularly good at cooking and lacks the confidence and special attention needed to raise a child.

In dire need of help through the chaos of newly-found motherhood, Kano decides to rely on old friend Saeki, a chef at a local restaurant. She asks Saeki to cook daily meals for Sora and keep an eye on her. From Saeki Sora learns not only how to cook, but also how pouring all her heart into the making of a dish has the power to heal people's souls. A touching story depicting the rebirth of a dysfunctional family through food.

Sonoko Machida is an award-winning Japanese author, born in 1980 in Fukuoka Prefecture. In 2016, she won the *Onna ni yoru onna no tame no R-18 bungakusho* (By Women for Women R-18 Literature Prize) for her *Kamerun no aoi sakana* (Blue Fish of Cameroon). Her masterpiece *52 herutsu no kujira-tachi* (The 52-Hertz Whales), won the 2021 Japanese Booksellers' Award and became a bestseller with about half a million copies sold in Japan. The following year, her novel *Hoshi wo sukuu* (Scooping Up the Stars) was nominated for the award for the second consecutive year. *Sora gohan* (Sora's Recipes) is her most recent work.



Category: Trade Fiction
 ISBN: 978-4-09-386653-8
 Pages: 240 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: September 2022
[English synopsis available on request.](#)

The Troublesome Dining Table

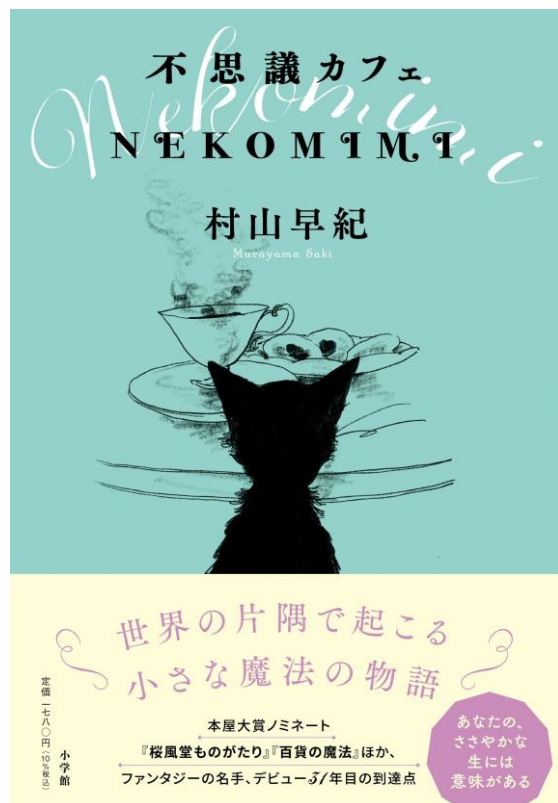
Yakkaina shokutaku / やっかいな食卓

Akari Mikimoto

Despite having lost her husband and eldest son, 72-years-old Rinko enjoys her independence and leads an extremely active life. Every day she is out and about. One day she studies calligraphy, the next she teaches flower arrangement. Since cooking is her forte, once a month she also holds a cooking class for men. Meanwhile, Yuki, the wife of Rinko's second son Takeru, is working at a dizzying pace to advance her career as a food stylist. She is a little concerned about her son skipping school, but work remains at the top of her priorities. She believes that simple meals are more than sufficient and that housework should be shared and made more efficient.

One day, Takeru comes up with a shocking proposal. "Why not move all in together?" Rinko fears that her carefree lifestyle will be threatened. Yuki admits that she and her mother-in-law are not the best of friends. The compromise they come up with is living all together but keeping separate dining tables. As soon as the two families start living under the same roof, "troublesome" incidents occur. The two dining tables clash and the boundaries between their meals gradually become blurred. A variation on the theme of the age-old conflict with the in-laws, the colorful meals and ever-extending list of family members gravitating around the dinner table make this an exhilarating, laugh-out-loud read.

Akari Mikimoto is the pen name of essay writer Chizuko Kamiya who was born in Chiba Prefecture in 1953 and graduated from Ochanomizu University, Faculty of Science. After her husband was transferred overseas, she resigned from her job at NHK and spent the next 23 years living in nine different countries as the wife of a diplomat. Her essays include *Oba michi* (Old Woman's Way) and *Josei no kenshiki* (A Woman's Discernment). This is her first novel.



Category: Trade Fiction
 ISBN: 978-4-09-386668-2
 Pages: 296 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: January 2023

English synopsis available on request.



The Incredible Nekomimi Café

Fushigi kafe NEKOMIMI / 不思議カフェNEKOMIMI

Saki Murayama

Ritsuko, a woman in her 50s living on her own, leads the most uneventful life one could ever think of. She works every day as diligently as she can and spends her spare time reading books or listening to music while sipping her favorite teas. One day she gets a terrible headache and is told that she is due to pass away that same night. Her life will only be spared if she accepts to shed her human nature and become a wizard.

That's how Ritsuko acquires the magical power to make people's wishes come true. With her black cat Melody by her side, Ritsuko embarks on an exciting new journey that will lead her to open the itinerant Nekomimi Café and meet all sorts of customers over tea and delicious handmade treats. The apparently unremarkable lives of those forgotten in secret corners of the world between the interstices of time swirl at the gentle touch of Ritsuko's magic. Interspersed throughout the book are delicate, black and white line drawings by popular Japanese illustrator, Rei Kurahashi.



Saki Murayama was born in Nagasaki in 1963 and graduated from the Department of Japanese Literature at Kwassui Women's University. A master of fantasy writing, she won the 15th Mainichi Fairy Tale Newcomer Award and the 4th Hatoju Muku Children's Literature Award for her 1993 picture book *Chiisai Eri-chan* (Little Eri). She was twice shortlisted for the Japan Booksellers' Award in 2017 for *Ofudo monogatari* (The Tale of Ofudo) and in 2018 for *Hyakka no maho* (The Magical Department Store), which was translated in Italian among other languages. In recent years, her series of novels *Konbini Tasogare-do* (The Tasogare Convenience Store) and *Kafe Kamome-tei* (The Kamome Café) set in the fictional city of Kazahaya gained great popularity both of public and critics.



Category: Trade Fiction
 ISBN: 978-4-09-406849-8
 Pages: 288 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: December 2020
[English synopsis available on request.](#)

3,000 Words Left to Live

Yomei 3000 moji / 余命3000文字

Gyatei Murasaki

The TikTok sensation that sold over 300,000 copies in Japan

What fate awaits a man who has been told by his doctor that he has only 3,000 words left to live? What if a boy were to receive on his birthday a rare Japanese “wild rich man,” a finicky creature that only accepts expensive goods from Ginza? What decision will a fetus take after being stuck in its mother’s belly for six years, refusing to be born? Twenty-six short stories by TikTok sensation and master of the absurd Gyatei Murasaki for the first time collected in an anthology. With striking titles like “My Boyfriend Became a Mackerel Can,” “Laundromat for the Heart” and “Tabelog 1.8 Ramen” be prepared to go from uncontrollable laughter to heart-wrenching grief in just under five minutes.

Gyatei Murasaki was born in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1994. His short stories initially posted on a literary website attracted a great deal of interest and were consequently published in this 2020 anthology entitled *Yomei 3000 moji* (3,000 Words Left to Live). Murasaki’s short story collections have now been turned by Shogakukan into the *5 Minute Reads* series, which includes *△ ga furu machi* (The City Where △ Fall) and *Anata no shitai o kaitorasete kudasai* (Please Let Me Buy Your Corpse).



Category: Crime
 ISBN: 978-4-09-386664-4
 Pages: 320 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: November 2022
[English synopsis available on request.](#)

The Chaplain

Kyokai / 教誨

Yuko Yuzuki

After ten years on death row, Kyoko Mihara is executed for having murdered her 8-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old neighbor in Japan's northern Aomori Prefecture. After the execution, Kasumi Yoshizawa a distant relative living in the suburbs of Tokyo is asked to collect Kyoko's remains at the Tokyo Detention Center. Having lived far away their whole life, Kasumi has only met Kyoko once at a family gathering as a primary school student, but since news of the murder had erupted in the media she always struggled to reconcile the memory of the gentle expression on her cousin's face with the image of a cold-blooded, evil killer portrayed by the public.

"I've kept my promise. Now praise me."—Kyoko's last words in the execution chamber stir in Kasumi the need to know the truth. In-between jobs she heads to Aomori, Kyoko's hometown and the scene of the crime, to find out the meaning of those mysterious last words. Through interactions with the locals and people who followed the case, what she discovers is a strict upbringing where abuse extends from the family to the whole community and love offers no protection. A crime novel that delves into the mind of a woman on death row to explore the social ramifications of a trauma that turns the victim into the aggressor.

Yuko Yuzuki is a Japanese crime novelist, born in 1968 in Iwate Prefecture. A great reader since childhood, as a teenager she watched with her mother the *Jinginaki tatakai* (Battles Without Honor and Humanity) film series retracing the yakuza conflicts in Hiroshima, which would later become the subject of her most acclaimed book, *Koro no chi* (The Blood of Wolves). The novel was adapted into a movie in 2018 and was the recipient of the 2016 Mystery Writers of Japan Award. For the social connotation of her work, her style is said to bear the imprint of Japanese crime writers Seicho Matsumoto and Hideo Yokoyama.



Category: Mystery

ISBN: 978-4-09-386456-5

Pages: 256 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: October 2016

Rights Sold: [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#), [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#), [Korean](#)

[English sample translation by Emily Balistrieri available on request.](#)

Endless Night

Yako / 夜行

Tomihiko Morimi

Author of *The Tatami Galaxy*, shortlisted for the 2023 PEN Translation Prize

Over 260,000 copies sold in Japan

Shortlisted for the Japan Booksellers' Award

Ohashi goes to Kyoto to attend the Kurama Fire Festival with some friends he hasn't seen in ten years—Nakai, Takeda, Fujimura, and Tanabe. The last time the five of them went, there was a sixth—Hasegawa, but on the night of the festival, she disappeared. Before meeting up with his friends, Ohashi catches sight of who he is convinced is Hasegawa going into a gallery. He enters, but instead of the woman, he finds copperplate engravings by an artist named Michio Kishida that seem to all depict the same endless night. Nakai mentions he's seen a Kishida engraving before, at a hotel in Onomichi and tells the story of why he traveled there. The other friends also share stories of recent travels involving death and disappearances at night. Finally, the five friends set out for the fire festival, but on their way back Ohashi is mysteriously separated from the group. When he phones Nakai, Nakai can't believe Ohashi is calling him. Was Ohashi the one who disappeared ten years ago? Do Kishida's *By Night* and *Dawn Light* engravings hold the key to the mystery?

Tomihiko Morimi was born in 1979 in Nara Prefecture. His first novel *Tower of the Sun*, which he wrote while studying at Kyoto University, won the 15th Japan Fantasy Novel Award. In 2006, he received the Yamamoto Shugoro Prize for the novel *The Night is Short, Walk on Girl*, and in 2010, *Penguin Highway* was awarded the Japan SF Grand Prize. In 2023, the English edition of *The Tatami Galaxy* translated by Emily Balistrieri and published by HarperCollins was shortlisted for the PEN Translation Prize. An English edition of the sequel, *The Tatami Time Machine Blues*, is planned for publication by HarperCollins in September 2023. Several of Tomihiko Morimi's works have been adapted into critically acclaimed anime series and films. He still lives and works in Nara.

TRADE FICTION



ISBN: 978-4-09-386655-2
 Pages: 306 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: September 2022
 Rights Sold: **Korean**
 English synopsis available on request.

Life in the Share House

Wakaba-so no kurashi / 若葉荘の暮らし

Tomomi Hatano

The Japanese bubble era of the 1980s and early 1990s seems nothing more than a distant memory. At the age of 40, Michiru Mochizuki has only ever experienced the low wages and precarious working conditions of temporary employment. She is working part-time at a local restaurant when, due to the outbreak of an infectious disease, customers plummet and her pay is drastically reduced. In desperate need of an affordable place to live, she is introduced by a friend to Residence Wakaba, a share house where only women over 40 are allowed to live. Never having considered shared living, she knocks on the front door with a sense of unease. But just as the discomfort of having reached a new low is setting in, she is warmly welcomed by elderly manager, Tokiko, and decides to give the share house a try. Award-winning author Tomomi Hatano offers a realistic portrait of the struggles faced by different generations of Japanese women in a country marred by economic stagnation and gender inequality. Women in their 40s belonging to the “employment ice age” generation that entered the workforce after the burst of the bubble economy, women in their 50s at the mercy of the controversial 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law and women in their 60s who had no choice but to conform to traditional gender expectations, all come to find in Residence Wakaba a safe haven where to support each other and define happiness on their own terms.

Tomomi Hatano is a Japanese novelist born in Tokyo in 1979. She cultivated her dream of becoming a writer while working part-time at manga cafés, cinemas and in the publishing industry. Her debut work, *Kokudou zoi no famiresu* (Family Restaurant on the National Highway), won the Shosetsu Subaru New Writers Award in 2010. She was twice nominated for the Eiji Yoshikawa Literary Prize for New Writers, in 2013 for *Umi no mieru machi* (A Town with a View of the Sea) and in 2014 for *Nanbu geinou jimusho* (The Nanbu Talent Agency). A prolific writer, her collection of short stories *Futatsu no hoshi to taimumashin* (Two Stars and a Time Machine) and novel *Taimumashin de wa, ikenai ashita* (A Tomorrow that Can't Be Reached by Time Machine) were both published by Shogakukan.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386656-9
 Pages: 256 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: September 2022

[English synopsis available on request.](#)

For Example, Grapes

Tatoeba, budo / たとえば、葡萄

Masumi Oshima

Naoki Prize-winning author

Mizuki, a company employee in her late twenties, decides on the spur of the moment to quit her dead-end corporate job and find a more fulfilling life path. However, when the pandemic brings the world around her to a standstill, in lack of a better option she is forced to move in with her mother's old friend Ichiko. As Mizuki drowns in despair, Ichiko and her circle of middle-aged friends lean in and with their strong personalities help their young new guest stand back on her feet. By chance, she ends up helping out at a local winery where she reconnects with an old childhood friend. "The world has already changed."—he tells her. And she knows she must change with it. But with no clear opportunity to do so in sight, which direction should she take? That's when she stumbles upon a grape juice made from the winery's grapes and decides that she must bet her future on that heavenly taste. Naoki Prize-winning author Masumi Oshima masterfully portrays the sense of stagnation and insecurity so prominent in our time and offers younger generations an example of hope and resilience in the face of seemingly unsurmountable obstacles.

Masumi Oshima was born in 1962. She was raised in Nagoya and grew up reading science fiction. Her debut work *Haru no tejinashi* (Spring Magician) was published in 1992 and won the 74th Bungakukai Prize for New Writers. Her 2003 novel *Chocolietta*, about a young woman who uses the Federico Fellini film *La Strada* to recover from her grief, was adapted into a 2015 film by screenwriter and director Shiori Kazawa. Her 2009 novel *Nijiuro tenki ame* (Rainbow Weather) and its 2010 sequel *Bitter Sugar*, about three women whose friendship is tested as they approach the age of 40, were adapted into a 2011 NHK TV series called *Bitter Sugar*. In 2019, Oshima won the Naoki Prize for her novel *Uzu: Imoseyama onna teikin, Tamamusubi* (Whirlpool: Husband and Wife Mountains, A Mirror of Virtuous Women, Requiem), a work of historical fiction about 18th century playwright and puppeteer Hanji Chikamatsu.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386654-5
 Pages: 224 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: October 2022

The Pickles Bar

Kon'ya, nukazuke sunakku de / 今夜、ぬか漬けスナックで

Toko Koyanaga

Upon receiving news that her mother has passed away, Makio visits Shodoshima Island in Japan's Seto Inland Sea. She has not heard from her mother in years and when she arrives on the island a man younger than herself named Ibuki claims to be her late mother's husband. Since Makio has just lost her job, Ibuki offers her to temporarily stay at his place and work at the bar he is now running instead of her late mother. Makio recalls her grandmother making *nukazuke* pickles when she was a little girl. Following faint memories of her instructions, she ferments vegetables in the *nukadoko* rice brain bed and serves the pickles at the bar. Through her various pickling experiments, Makio not only develops a connection with the residents of the island, but also discovers a surprising side of a mother she always assumed had no feelings for her. Will the familiar scent of the fermenting rice brain carried by the warm island breeze be sufficient to soothe Maiko's sorrow? With chapters centered around each step of the laborious fermentation process, Toko Koyanaga turns *nukazuke* pickles into a metaphor of life, which must be regularly stirred even when the surface appears to be clear.

Toko Koyanaga was born in Aomori Prefecture in 1982 and graduated from Hirosaki University, Faculty of Humanities. In 2019, she won the 1st Japan Delicious Fiction Award for *Nanado waraeba, koi no aji* (Laugh Seven Times to Taste Love). The award was established to honor the work of fiction writers who excel in the portrayal of food. Judges include Kundo Koyama, screenwriter for the legendary Japanese television cooking show "Iron Chef," Naoki Prize-winning author Ichiriki Yamamoto and Hisashi Kashiwai, author of Shogakukan's international bestselling series, *Kamogawa shokudo* (The Kamogawa Diner). *Kon'ya, nukazuke sunakku de* (The Pickles Bar) is Koyanaga's first novel after receiving the award.



ISBN: 978-4-09-407135-1
 Pages: 352 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: April 2022

Welcome to the Kitchenware Shop

Ryori doguya ni youkoso / 料理道具屋にようこそ

Ayumu Ueno

Since the web design company he self-started in the city is not taking off, Michika decides to return to his hometown and take over the family business, a small shop selling kitchenware and restaurant supplies. Although it feels good to be back, sales are at an all-time low and the shop, Kitchenware Tokumiya, is in a tight spot. When he hears from the owner of a nearby restaurant that he'd visited the shop on a number of occasions but could never find what he needed, Michika realizes that their product lineup is completely wrong and swift change is needed.

A reunion with classmate Yui, who produces plastic food samples to be displayed in restaurants, gives Michika a chance to take a step in the right direction. A coming-of-age novel that brings back to life the old-fashioned charm of Japanese ceramics, lacquerware and beautifully crafted knives and is sure to enthrall lovers of Japanese cuisine.

Ayumu Ueno was born and raised in downtown Tokyo. He graduated from Senshu University with a degree in Japanese Literature and claims to have become a writer thanks to the wish he hung as a student on a bar's bamboo decoration for the Tanabata festival, "May I win the Nobel Prize in Literature." After working as a reporter for a number of magazines, he made his debut as a writer in 1994 with *Koibito to issho ni narudeshou* (You'll Surely Be with Your Lover), which won the 7th Shosetsu Subaru New Writers Award for fiction. After a ten-year hiatus in which he supported emerging authors at a self-publishing business, he resumed his writing career with the intention to focus on characters' relationship with their profession.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386661-3
 Pages: 208 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: November 2022

The Kitchen Is Calling

Kitchin ga yonderu! / キッチンが呼んでる!

Shunsuke Inada

Three days after moving in, a toaster oven is delivered by courier to the studio apartment of a young, single woman. Clothes, make-up, cleaning products randomly piled up on the bed or dumped on the floor, did she really need one more box to add to the general chaos? Completely lost in her work, the next time she takes her eyes off the screen it is already 8:00 pm. She buys a ham and lettuce sandwich and a steamed meat bun from the local convenience store and, when she returns home, sits down to enjoy the very first meal in her new home. Many more meals follow—some on her own, some with her loved ones, some involving the most intricate recipes and others nothing more than fast food or a takeaway. But as days go by, alongside the young woman's culinary wanderings grows the utter pleasure of having a space of her own. Thirty days, one meal a day, natural-born foodie Shunsuke Inada leaves no corner of the kitchen unexplored. From appliances and cooking utensils, to seasonings and favorite recipes, *The Kitchen Is Calling* takes us on a delicious journey of female self-discovery and emancipation.

Shunsuke Inada is a chef and restaurant producer, born in Kagoshima Prefecture. After graduating from Kyoto University, he worked for a beverage manufacturing company and subsequently joined Enso Food Service. In 2011, he opened in the Yaesu underground shopping mall of Tokyo Station Eric South, a popular South Indian restaurant that currently boasts multiple types of stores. His writing is mainly devoted to exploring food from a wide variety of angles. This is his first novel.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386633-0
 Pages: 208 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: April 2022

I Can Do My Best Now

Ima, dekiru, seiippai. / 今、出来る、精一杯。

Shuko Nemoto

The setting is the backyard of a supermarket, Mama's Kitchen. An unreliable manager, a beauty queen, a female part-timer with a strong sense of justice, and a male clerk with a stutter are all carrying out their duties day after day while trying to come to terms with each other. One day, a man who has never been able to hold on to a job and lives under the protection of his girlfriend is interviewed by the manager and hired without delay. As soon as he is exposed to face-to-face interactions, unable to cope with troublesome workplace relationships he feels the urge to withdraw in isolation and become once again a recluse. However, an incident gets in the way. In this ensemble drama the inner lives of 12 people clashing to impose their own petty interests are masterfully depicted by the enfant prodige of Japanese theater.

Shuko Nemoto is a Japanese screenwriter, actor and playwright. Born in Tokyo in 1989, she started her theater company, Gekkan Nemoto Shuko, when she was 19 and has since written and directed all of its plays. Recent productions include the 2020 play *Mottomo ooi naru ai he* (To the Greatest Love). Nemoto's work is animated by a continuous search for new forms of expression, not only in theatrical performance, but also in screenplay writing and musical accompaniment. *Ima, dekiru, seiippai.* (I Can Do My Best Now) is her first novel.



ISBN: 978-4-09-388334-4

Pages: 208 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: November 2013

Rights Sold: Catalan, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese (Portugal), Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish

The Kamogawa Diner

Kamogawa shokudo / 鴨川食堂

Hisashi Kashiwai

International bestseller translated in over 17 languages

The Kamogawa Diner has no signboard or fabric curtains. Customers come to this inconspicuous eatery near Higashi Honganji in Kyoto relying on a single line advertisement, "Search for the food of your memories." They are people with concerns typical of the time we live in—work, family, life, love, interpersonal relationships. When they finally arrive at the correct location, the owner of the diner and his daughter listen with great care as the customers describe a memorable dish they had in the past. Thanks to the owner's instinct and power of observation, the meal the customer truly desires is identified and recreated with masterful skill. The wonderful scenes of Kyoto in the background, the touching episodes focused on a wide range of customers, and the delicious meals served make this an excellent addition to the much-beloved genre of Japanese gastronomic fiction.

Hisashi Kashiwai was born in 1952 and graduated from Osaka Dental University in 1976. He runs his own private dental clinic and also writes essays and novels about Kyoto, food and travelling. He is the author of many essays including *Ohitori Kyoto no tanoshimi* (Enjoying Kyoto on Your Own), *Nihon hyaku mei shuku* (100 Famous Japanese Inns) and *Ohitorikara no himitsu no Kyoto* (Exploring Secret Kyoto on Your Own), as well as novels.



ISBN: 978-4-09-408545-7

Pages: 208 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: September 2010

Rights Sold: Catalan, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Croatian, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese (Portugal), Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Slovene, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese

Days at the Morisaki Bookshop

Morisaki shoten no hibi / 森崎書店の日々

Satoshi Yagisawa

International bestseller, translated in over 25 languages and adapted into a film

Takako, a 25 year old born and raised on the southern island of Kyushu, has lived a relatively easy life. She went to a good university and got a graduate job at a company in Tokyo. However, when her charming boyfriend, Kashikoi, casually announces that he's been cheating on her and is planning to marry somebody else, Takako's life suddenly starts falling apart. She loses her job and with it all of her friends and acquaintances. She ends up in a deep depression, but just as her despair seems to have reached rock bottom, she receives a call from her distant uncle. Her Ojisan runs the Morisaki Bookshop, a secondhand store in Jimbocho, Tokyo's famous book district which is home to hundreds of used bookshops and publishing houses. Takako used to turn her nose up at Ojisan's unconventional way of life but when he offers her the tiny room above the bookshop rent-free in exchange for helping out at the store, she reluctantly agrees. In the months that follow, Takako discovers a passion for Japanese literature and her life starts to come back together again.

Satoshi Yagisawa was born in 1977 in Chiba Prefecture and graduated from Nihon University. *Morisaki shoten no hibi* (Days at the Morisaki Bookshop) is his debut novel. After winning the Chiyoda Literary Prize, it became a publishing sensation in Japan, as well as in Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan. The book was adapted into a film and a sequel was published in 2011.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386463-3

Pages: 224 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: January 2017

Rights Sold: Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Portuguese (Portugal), Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese

The Cat Who Saved Books

Hon wo mamorou to suru neko no hanashi / 本を守ろうとする猫の話

Sosuke Natsukawa

International bestseller translated in over 39 languages

The Natsuki Bookstore is a small and dusty secondhand bookshop, tucked away in a remote corner of town. It houses countless masterpieces from all over the world, but no bestsellers, popular comics or magazines. When his beloved grandfather suddenly dies, high school student Rintaro inherits the bookshop. In the general disinterest towards books, Rintaro sees no choice but to close it, until he meets Tiger, a speaking cat, who convinces him to go with him on an adventure to save books. Thus begins an amazing journey through different mazes and challenges to set books free. A magical story for book and cat lovers alike, *The Cat Who Saved Books* was an instant bestseller in Japan and has been translated in over 38 languages around the world.

“Enchanting” *Observer*

“Quirky and heartwarming in equal measure, *The Cat Who Saved Books* invites us to remember the joy of curling up with a favorite book.” *Japan Times*

“Combine *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* with *Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore* and you might get a feel for this delightful novel.” *Washington Post*

Sosuke Natsukawa is a Japanese physician and novelist, born in Osaka Prefecture in 1978. He graduated from the Shinshu University School of Medicine and, while working as a doctor, made his debut in 2009 with multivolume novel *Kamisama no karute* (In His Chart), which won several prizes and sold over three million copies in Japan.

LITERARY FICTION



ISBN: 978-4-09-386541-8

Pages: 320 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: May 2019

[English sample translation by Alison Watts available on request.](#)

Buddha on the Waterside

Mizube no Buddha / 水辺のブツダ

Durian Sukegawa

International bestselling author of *Sweet Bean Paste*

Beneath the bright lights and prosperous veneer of urban Japan is an underbelly of poverty and desperation where the homeless and marginalized struggle to survive. On the banks of the Tama River on the outskirts of Tokyo, the lives of an estranged father and his long lost daughter cross without ever succeeding to meet. In reaching out for each other, however, Bota, a disgraced white-collar worker, and Eri, a high school student with a history of abuse, find a route to escape the darkness in their heart, forever changing their fates.

From the bestselling author of *Sweet Bean Paste*, this gritty but authentic portrayal of homelessness, sex and violence in contemporary Japan ultimately has an uplifting message of hope for anyone struggling to rise above difficult circumstances, and challenges us to find new meaning in nature and our connection to others.

Durian Sukegawa studied oriental philosophy at Waseda University, reported from Eastern Europe and Cambodia in the early 1990s, and has worked extensively in radio and TV. He is currently associate professor at Meiji Gakuin University. Renowned as a writer of non-fiction, essays and novels championing society's disadvantaged and downtrodden, his novel *Sweet Bean Paste* is an international bestseller that has been translated into 19 languages and adapted into the homonymous film. During the pandemic it found new popularity with audiences worldwide, and was chosen by international charity Shelterbox as book of the month in June 2022. In 2017 Sukegawa was awarded the prestigious Prix Littéraire Domitys and Prix des Lecteurs du Livre de Poche.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386626-2

Pages: 432 pages

Printing: Black & White

Publication: December 2021

[English synopsis available on request.](#)

The Strangling Tree

Shimegoroshi no ki / 絞め殺しの樹

Akiko Kawasaki

Shortlisted for the 2022 Naoki Prize

Yusuke Yoshioka has never met Misae, his birth mother. She was as kind and as strong as a tree, he is told for the first time in front of her grave at the age of 18. But the stronger a person is, the more others lean on them and crash them under the weight of their burdens. That's why the Bodhi Tree, the sacred fig tree where Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment, is also called the "strangling tree." As it grows, it coils around stronger trees, robs them of their nutrition and eventually kills them.

Misae was born in Nemuro, on the eastern tip of Hokkaido, and raised in Niigata. She has no recollection of her parents' faces. In 1945, when she was only ten years old, she was sold to the Yoshioka family as a servant and returned to her hometown of Nemuro, but awaiting her there were days of cruelty beyond her wildest imagination. A childhood spent like a slave, a marriage anything but happy, her daughter's suicide, parting with her son forever. After a life of so many sufferings, could Misae have possibly been happy? Yusuke sets out on a journey to find his own life path by retracing the steps of his birth mother.

Akiko Kawasaki is a multi-award-winning author, born in Betsukai, Hokkaido in 1979. In 2019, she won the Oyabu Haruhiko Prize for *Nikudan* (Human Bullet). In 2020, she won the Nitta Jiro Literary Award and was nominated for the Mishima Yukio Prize for *Tsuchi ni aganau* (Redeeming the Earth). In 2022, *Shimegoroshi no ki* (The Strangling Tree) was shortlisted for the Naoki Prize.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386638-5
 Pages: 240 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: April 2022

Gold Sunset

Gorudo sansetto / ゴールドサンセット

Haruka Shirao

“Full of laughter and love for the creative process.” Shion Miura, author of *The Great Passage*

A junior high school girl, a single woman in her 40s, a retired man, a man with dementia, a gay young man, his wife and mother-in-law, an elderly actor...Organized in six acts inspired by lines from famous plays, this poignant and touching new novel carefully depicts how in the face of hardship and trauma we can all find a small glimmer of hope. Act I, Open Light. A junior high school girl commits suicide due to bullying. Her classmate, who is struggling to cope with her sudden death, meets the elderly actor living next door. What is the purpose of his strange behavior? Act II, Swimming in Golden Water. A single woman in her 40s has worked hard and lived conscientiously her whole life. While struggling to find a job and a suitable partner, she reflects on her past. Will she find any answers? Act III, Golden Girls. A man in his retirement stumbles upon a woman he once sexually abused and power harassed. The encounter leads to a painful ending. Act IV, Nostalgic Evening Glow. Two young men visit an old man's house. Who are they? And what memories do they treasure? Act V, Golden Names. The pain and conflict all women face once in their life is depicted from a woman's specific point of view. Interlude. All characters encounter and bond. Final Act, Gold Light. The last act of life is filled with regret and a deep love that will never return. And yet, the strength to live on remains unchanged.

Haruka Shirao was born in Kanagawa Prefecture and raised in Tokyo. After graduating from college in the U.S., she returned to Japan and is now a freelance digital content producer and marketer. In 2017, she won both the Grand Prize and Readers' Prize of the 16th *Onna ni yoru onna no tame no R-18 bungakusho* (By Women for Women R-18 Literature Prize) for *Akurosu za yunibas* (Across the Universe). Her hobbies include reading books and manga, watching movies and foreign dramas, taking walks, and writing haiku.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386667-5
 Pages: 304 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: January 2023

What Color Am I?

Boku wa nani iro / ぼくはなにいろ

Shosho Kuroda

Shoji, who has been living a solitary life after being injured in a car accident, meets one night at his favorite bar Chihiro. Chihiro appears dazzlingly vivacious to Shoji, but her bubbly personality acts as a cover for an unspeakable trauma. Takashiro, whose sole purpose in life is to scratch lottery tickets, helps his father at the family's stationery shop. Emi, a school dropout, keeps drawing on the notebooks left out on the shelves to test pens and markers. She gets written updates about life at school from a boy who is unable to speak. Shosho Kuroda, one of Japan's most promising young authors, weaves a delicate net between young people each hurting in a tiny world of their own making. The resounding message that comes across every page is, "You have the right to live."

Shosho Kuroda was born in 1994 in Fukuoka Prefecture. In 2019, he won the Shogakukan Bunko Award for Fiction for *Haru ga mata kuru* (Spring Will Come Again). He made his debut as a writer in 2020 with *Mattaku, aokunai* (Not at All Blue), a retitled version of his award-winning novel. *Boku wa nani iro* (What Color Am I?) is his second novel.

CRIME & MYSTERY



ISBN: 978-4-09-406791-0
 Pages: 368 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: July 2020

What Did You Do That Day?

Ano hi, kimi wa nani wo shita / あの日、君は何をした

Toshika Masaki

300,000 copies sold in Japan

Izumi Mizuno's uneventful life as an ordinary housewife drastically ends when her son, Taiki, is mistaken for a suspect in a serial murder case and dies in an accident. What was Taiki up to when he snuck out of the house late at night and rode away on his bicycle? Fifteen years later, a young woman is murdered in Tokyo and the key witness, Tatsuhiko Momoi, a company employee, goes missing. Frustrated by his wife's indifference, Tatsuhiko's mother, Chie, desperately tries to find him.

As detectives Mitsuya and Tadokoro proceed with their investigation, it soon becomes clear that the two mothers' feelings for their sons are intertwined and the shocking truth that links the two seemingly unrelated cases comes to light.

Toshika Masaki was born in 1965 and currently resides in Sapporo. She won the Hokkaido Shimbun Literature Award in 2007 for *Chiru saku meguru* (Scatter, Bloom, Surround). Made her literary debut in 2008 with *Yoru no sora no hoshi no* (The Stars in the Night Sky). A prolific writer, her latest novel published by Shogakukan is *Kanojo ga saigo ni mita mono wa* (The Last Thing She Saw).



ISBN: 978-4-09-407176-4
 Pages: 304 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: September 2022

Dying at 25

Watashitachi wa 25-sai de shinde shimau / 私たちは25歳で死んでしまう

Amemichi Sunagawa

For hundreds of years, toxins brought by unknown bacteria have been raging. The world population has plummeted and average human life expectancy does not exceed 25 years of age. In order to contain the population's decline and ensure basic urban functions, the central government has severely restricted the freedom to work and choose a life partner. Citizens are expected to marry the person assigned to them and bear as many children as possible. A dystopian novel describing the struggles of six women in a world where all basic rights have been denied and uncertainty is the only certainty.

Amemichi Sunagawa is a Japanese novelist born in Niigata Prefecture and currently living in Tokyo. In 2013, she began writing "mobile phone novels," a popular type of literature originated in Japan where literary works are written on a mobile phone via text messaging. She currently writes for a number of literary websites, including *Novema!* and *Berry's Cafe*. Her books include the *Gokainin!!* (Conception) series and *Okizari no futari* (The Abandoned Couple).



ISBN: 978-4-09-386650-7
 Pages: 258 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: June 2022

The Suicide Support Service

Sanzu / さんず

Ten Furuta

Sanzu is a provider of assisted suicide services, that quietly sneaks up on those who can't seem to make up their minds and decide to die. Its name is said to derive from the Sanzu River, a river that flows between the world we live in and the afterlife. As a modern-day Charon, Sanzu helps people whose life has become unbearable to cross the river and reach the afterlife. On the company's website customers can choose between two plans, the "Snuggle Plan" and the "Together Plan," each leading to a different but equally unexpected end. A convenience store clerk victim of power and sexual harassment, a woman who continues to think about a man in prison, a wealthy man trying to find a buyer for his butterfly collection, the owner of a bar struggling to pay off his debts, a female teacher disrespected by her boss at the school she has been assigned to—five short stories in which the lives of those wishing to die intersect and the meaning of life itself is questioned.

Ten Furuta is the pen name of So Ayukawa and Ei Hagino, who are known for having won in 2014 the *Kono Misuteri ga Sugoi!* (This Mystery Is Excellent!) Grand Prize for *Joo wa kaeranai* (The Queen Will Not Return). In 2018, their short story *Itsuwari no haru* (Fake Spring) won the Mystery Writers of Japan Award in the short story category.



ISBN: 978-4-09-407127-6
 Pages: 416 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: March 2022

The Vanishing Son

Kieru musuko / 消える息子

Yoshiaki Ando

“That’s where I was killed.” Kazuo Miyatsu, a civil servant in Hachioji (a city west of central Tokyo), is taken by his son to a lake where he receives the startling confession. At the same time, a strangulation-like mark appears on his son’s neck and Kazuo starts to have nightmares about strangling a mysterious man by the water. The coincidence of his son making such a statement exactly in the same location where a body was found 33 years ago is too strange to be ignored. Could there be a connection between his son and the man Kazuo had killed in the past? One day, Kazuo’s vision becomes distorted and he finds himself standing in the Hachioji of 33 years ago. There Kazuo meets a man he thinks could be his son in a previous life...Will saving this man result in his son disappearing from the present? The ultimate time-slip mystery.

Yoshiaki Ando was born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1956 and graduated from the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Meiji University. In 1994, he won the Japan Mystery and Suspense Grand Prize for *Shi ga maiorita* (Death Descended), and in 2000, he won the Horror and Suspense Grand Prize for *Kishimojin* (the Japanese goddess of childbirth and children). Ando’s suspense and detective novels have attracted considerable interest in Japan for the meticulousness of their crime reporting.



ISBN: 978-4-09-407169-6
 Pages: 384 pages
 Printing: Black & White
 Publication: August 2022

To My Mother, Who Died That Day

Ano hi ni naku naru anata e / あの日に亡くなるあなたへ

Yu Fujinoki

Harusho Kusakabe works as an obstetrician and gynecologist at a university hospital. When he was little, his pregnant mother collapsed in front of him and died. Since then, Harusho has had to live with the regret of not having offered any help. One day, at his parents' house his mother's old phone starts ringing. Curious, he takes the call and is surprised to hear his late mother's voice come gushing out of the receiver. However, only on rainy days the mysterious phone call has the power to connect Harusho to his mother. Relying on this last, thin thread, Harusho decides the time has come to save his mother and by changing the past, he will change the future.

Yu Fujinoki is a Japanese novelist, as well as an obstetrician and gynecologist. He began writing fiction in 2019 and his debut work *Magiwa no gohan* (Restaurant Magiwa's Rice) was published in 2021. He has also written a number of practical books related to his medical profession.



ISBN: 978-4-09-386657-6
Pages: 322 pages
Printing: Black & White
Publication: November 2022

The December Diary

12 gatsu no jisho / 十二月の辞書

Kou Hayase

Kaoru Nagumo, an AI researcher, receives a phone call from his ex-lover for the first time in 15 years. She has become a popular illustrator who goes by the name of Lise. Her father, the president of a bank, has recently passed away and left her a house in Hakodate, a city in the southern tip of Hokkaido. Nagumo is asked to find a portrait of Lise her father made, which is still supposed to be in the house. However, when Nagumo reaches the property, what he finds is not an art studio but a library. Nagumo and a student, Saeki, begin to search for the painting. A romantic mystery book brimming with sadness and suspense, where memories of a love that did not end well are interwoven with thousands of books.

Kou Hayase was born in Tokyo in 1967 and made his debut as writer in 1992 with *Gurifonzu gaden* (Griffons' Garden). His other books include *Mihitsu no Makubesu* (Unconscious Macbeth), *Puranetariumu no sotogawa* (Outside the Planetarium), and *Kanojo no shiranai sora* (The Sky She Doesn't Know).