POPLAR
PUBLISHING



# Foreign Rights Catalog 2026

# About Us

Poplar Publishing Co., Ltd. was founded in 1947. Starting as a children's books publisher, we published many best-selling series, including *Butt Detective* series, *Zorori* series and *Tyrannosaurus* series, which have sold millions of copies worldwide.

Poplar expanded its range of books by publishing books for adults, including fiction, non-fiction, essays and business books. We have several award-winning books such as *The Lonely Castle in the Mirror* and *What You Are Looking for Is in the Library*. Moreover, many novels such as *Snail's Restaurant*, *The Lion's Snack*, *Sweet Bean* and *Midnight Bakery* series have been adapted into films and TV dramas.

Poplar publishes around 400 titles annually and has licensed titles to more than 40 languages. We are always looking for new partners and further cooperation around the globe.

# Contact

**Poplar Publishing Co., Ltd.**

3-5-8, Nishigotanda, Shinagawa-ku,
Tokyo, 141-8210 JAPAN

https://www.poplar.co.jp/foreignRights/
foreign-rights-sales@poplar.co.jp

Cover art from *On Rainy Days* ©Ayu Iwashima

# *Contents*

Upmarket Fiction ..... 2
Cozy Mystery ..... 14
Horror ..... 16
Picture Books for Adults ..... 18

NEW

# *On Rainy Days*

## Author : Haruna Terachi




Publication: May 2026
218 pages

**Agent:**
Tuttle-Mori Agency
(World, excluding Asia)

**➡English synopsis and sample translation available**

**Keywords:**
umbrella shop, second life, midlife crisis

### A linked collection of stories depicting the "next chapter" in the lives of women in their 40s, set around a unique umbrella shop.

Tucked away in a shopping arcade in Osaka stands the quirky Wakaba Umbrella Shop. Around this unexpected place, the lives of five women in their 40s quietly intersect.

Motoka, 48, lives alone in an old apartment after divorcing her husband due to his infidelity. Her children have grown up and moved out, and although her income is modest and the future remains uncertain, she finds an unexpected sense of contentment in a life surrounded only by things she has chosen for herself.
One rainy day, she stumbles into the Wakaba Umbrella Shop, where a punk-styled woman in her 60s lends her an umbrella printed with the words: "*On Rainy Days, Put Up Your Umbrella.*" This simple message begins to resonate beyond the moment.

Meanwhile, Kyoko finds unexpected freedom—and loneliness—after her breakup, spending her days visiting theme parks alone. Mitsuho has long dreamed of owning a home in her own name, rather than being defined by others. Sonomi, overwhelmed by childcare, housework, and part-time work, struggles with a lingering sense that something is missing, even though she "should" be happy. Mineko grieves the loss of her beloved mother, unable to find a place to settle her heart.

Divorce, singlehood, work, parenting, aging and loss—each woman faces her own kind of "rain." Through small encounters and quiet shifts within themselves, they begin to move forward in their own ways.

They may not have become the adults they once imagined, but an unexpected life can be like waiting for the next episode of a favorite drama—full of possibility. A warm and uplifting collection that gently reminds readers that there is still something to look forward to in the life ahead.

**Terachi Haruna:** Based in Osaka, she won the 9th Kawai Hayao Prize for *Sewing Water (Mizu wo Nuu )* and the Osaka Booksellers' Award for *Hotaruishi Majical Land*. She was also nominated for the Japan Booksellers' Award for *Those Who Stand by the River (Kawa no Hotori ni Tatsu Mono wa)*.

# *Hotaruishi Magical Land*

## Author : Haruna Terachi




Publication: February 2021
283 pages

**Rights sold:**
Indonesian

**Agent:**
Tuttle-Mori Agency
(World, excluding Asia)

**➡English synopsis and sample translation available**

**Keywords:**
the power of connection, professional approach to work, rebuilding one's life

**A heartwarming workplace novel, depicting a nostalgic amusement park and the small miracles born from human connections.**

**Winner of the Osaka Booksellers' Award.**

Hotaruishi Magical Land is a beloved, long-standing amusement park located in the fictional city of Hotaruishi in northern Osaka. There is a merry-go-round that is rumoured to grant wishes.While the president, Ichiko Kunimura, and many employees work happily there, each harbors their own struggles.

Sae Hagiwara, who works at the information desk, quietly wonders if this amusement park is truly where she belongs, all the while diligently handling her meticulous daily tasks. When an elderly man arrives, having lost his grandson, Sae kindly assists him, even as her colleague shies away from the situation. Unbeknownst to her, the elderly man's grandson is a young man secretly tasked with reporting on the amusement park's operations to the hospitalized president.

Sou Murase, an attraction staff member, has dreamed of working with his beloved merry-go-round since joining the company, but his wish has yet to come true. Yaeko Shinozuka, a cleaning staff member, happens to see her son—born from her marriage with her ex-husband—at the amusement park and is overcome with guilt. Katsuyori Yamada, who has devoted his career to tending to flowers and plants, is taken aback when a young colleague seeks his advice on an unexpected matter as his retirement approaches.

Set during a week when the president is hospitalized, this story follows imperfect yet wholehearted characters as they unexpectedly connect with others and come to realize someone will surely recognize your efforts and what is truly meaningful in life. Perfect for fans of Shion Miura's *The Great Passage*.

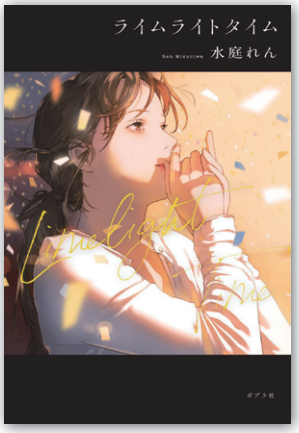
Hotaruishi Magical Land, with its nostalgic charm, is inspired by Hirakata Park, Japan's oldest amusement park in Osaka Prefecture.

**Terachi Haruna:** Based in Osaka, she won the 9th Kawai Hayao Prize for *Sewing Water (Mizu wo Nuu )* and the Osaka Booksellers' Award for *Hotaruishi Majical Land*. She was also nominated for the Japan Booksellers' Award for *Those Who Stand by the River (Kawa no Hotori ni Tatsu Mono wa)*.

NEW

# *Limelight Time*

## Author : Ren Mizuniwa




Publication:December 2026
321 pages

➡English synopsis available

**Keywords:**
filmmaking, director and actor, second chances, overcoming the past

**Two struggling pairs of filmmakers and actors set out to make a movie in this powerful entertainment epic about pain, redemption, and second chances.**

Four regular customers are summoned to a tasting event for a new menu at a long-established Tokyo restaurant famous among film industry professionals.
They are: Yozan Kikuchi, an actor whose career collapsed after a drinking scandal at the height of his fame; Noriko Myojo, a lighting technician from the theater world; Ange Fuji, a former idol who abruptly left a hugely popular group; and Sasuke Hatsushiba, a promising young film director whose career has recently stalled.

As they struggle to understand why they have been brought together, a surprise guest appears: Thomas, a world-renowned producer and friend of the restaurant's owner. He makes an extraordinary proposal. "For cinema to have a future, multiple talents must emerge at the same time. I'm giving you ten million yen. I want you to make a hit movie."

Though bewildered, the four share a common need: each is desperate for a chance to turn their lives around. They decide to take on the challenge. The teams are determined by the dishes they choose. Yozan and Noriko, who eat the bouillabaisse, form the Red Team, while Ange and Sasuke, who choose the clam chowder, become the White Team. As filming begins, however, the members of each team soon discover that their creative ambitions and ideas do not always align.

Told through the alternating perspectives of all four protagonists, the novel follows their journeys as they confront the failures and regrets of their pasts, break through their emotional barriers, and ultimately create films unlike any they have made before.

Written by an author working in the film industry, this novel is filled with fascinating behind-the-scenes insights into filmmaking, as well as references and trivia from classic cinema. It is a moving story about creativity, resilience, and the power of collaboration.

**Ren Mizuniwa:** Won the Shosetsu Gendai New Writer Award for Long Fiction with *The Marvelous Morning Glory (Uruu no Asagao)*, which marked his literary debut. His other works include *Tonight Again, the Cats Are Communicating (Koyoi mo Neko wa Koshinchu)*.

NEW

# *How to Sleep in a Corner of the Universe*

Author : **Tomomi Hatano**




Publication: September 2025
303pages

➡English synopsis available

**Keywords:**
sleepless nights, loneliness, finding one's own way, inner change

**A tender story that gently embraces sleepless nights, woven with practical sleeping tips, following a young woman as she finds her own way in life.**

Yori is grieving the loss of her fiancé Naoki, with whom she shared eight and a half years since college. Naoki, who was supposed to be on a business trip to Osaka, mysteriously ended up at a hot spring inn in Tohoku with a woman—and died in a bus accident on the way back. Unable to sleep, Yori begins working at a department store's bedding section, where the caring manager offers her comfort.

There, she meets customers struggling with sleep: an elderly woman who cannot speak up to her husband and has long used unsuitable bedding, a young woman who lost sleep after parting with a beloved blanket, a mother who always puts her family first, neglecting her own needs. And one day, the husband of the woman who died alongside her fiancé visits the store, and Yuri begins meeting him once a month, just to talk and share what they have on their minds.

This novel follows Yori's journey traces her quiet transformation—from unknowingly shaping her life around her fiancé's wishes to discovering her own path and moving forward with confidence. It also highlights the transformation of her coworkers and the women who visit the bedding section, each with their own backgrounds and stories.

Throughout the book, readers will find practical sleep tips woven into the narrative, such as "the body adjusts its alignment during sleep, so bedding that allows you to easily turn over is ideal." This is a heartwarming story that blends emotional healing with everyday wisdom.

**Tomomi Hatano:** Debuted in 2010 with *Family Restaurant Along the Highway (Kokudozoi no Famiresu)*, which won the Subaru Literary Prize for New Writers. Her works *A Town with a View of the Sea (Umi no Mieru Machi )* and *Nanbu Entertainment Agency (Nanbu Geino Jimusho )* were nominated for the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for New Writers.

# *The Cat Keeper's Diner on Enoshima Island*

Author : **Sawako Natori**




Publication: February 2017
311 pages

**Agent:**
Emily Books Agency (World, excluding East Asia)

**Keywords:**
intergenerational family saga, women's lives across generations, cats and human bounds, small island

## A multi-generational story of four women and the cats they care for, set in a diner on a small island near Tokyo.

The story is set at Hanbuntei, a diner and inn on Enoshima, a small island about an hour from Tokyo. For generations, a secret role has been passed down among the island's women: the Nekomori, caretakers who look after the island's cats.

The novel opens in 2017 with Mayu, a teenage girl whose family has run Hanbuntei for generations. One day, mounting debt forces them to flee the island, facing the loss of the diner that has long been their livelihood. As the narrative moves back through time, the lives of the women who sustained Hanbuntei across the generations gradually come to light.

In the 1910s, twelve-year-old Sumie begins to inherit the role of Nekomori from her mother, learning the traditions of caring for the island's cats. When a close friend is forced to leave the island, she entrusts Sumie with a cherished hair ornament as a keepsake. The promise attached to this memento quietly echoes across the decades and ultimately connects to the novel's final chapter.

In the 1960s, Fude, a resilient woman, struggles to preserve both the family restaurant and the Nekomori tradition during an era of dramatic social and economic changes of postwar Japan. In the 1980s, Yoko struggles with a growing desire to leave the island, torn between her own aspirations and the responsibilities she has inherited as part of her family's legacy.

In the final chapter, a promise made more than a century earlier finally reaches Mayu, bringing the novel's intertwined stories of family, friendship, and devotion to a powerful and emotionally satisfying close.

**Sawako Natori:** After working for a game company, Natori made her debut as a writer in 2010. Her works include *Penguin Railway Lost and Found (Penguin Tetsudo Nakushimonogakari)*, which won the 5th Ekinaka Bookstore Award, as well as *The Friday Bookshop*, among many others.

NEW

# *The Most Beautiful Crown*

Author : **Ken Ogido**




Publication: October 2025
470pages

**Rights sold:**
traditional Chinese

**➡English synopsis available**

**Keywords:**
facing one's own guilt, bullying forgiveness, friendship, family

**A story that begins with a setting reminiscent of *Squid Game* but ends with a completely different aftertaste—a fresh, new kind of story.**

**Like *Adolescence*, it takes the perspective of the perpetrator and explores what it means to face one's own guilt—a coming-of-age novel that delves into the deepest recesses of the human heart.**

On the first day of summer vacation, Honoka, a second-year middle school student, finds herself in an unfamiliar gymnasium. Around her are seven other boys and girls. A mysterious figure tells them: "You will now perform a play."
As the eight of them practice, each begins to feel a strange sense of déjà vu—This scene… it feels like something I've experienced before. Then the leader announces: "This is the punishment you've been given. I'm just here to watch."

Under the condition that no one runs away, they are allowed to speak freely. It soon becomes clear that the other seven have all hurt someone in the past. Honoka thinks: "I was bullied. I never bullied anyone. So why am I here?"
But then she realizes that something she did out of kindness had actually driven her closest friend into a corner.

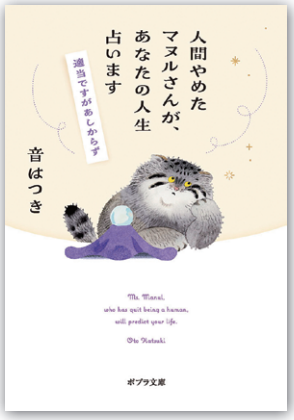
The eight believe that if they complete the play, they will discover a way to reconcile and make amends. They throw themselves into rehearsals. But near the end, the leader declares: " The script ends here. You must decide the ending yourselves."

Can an apology truly bring forgiveness? Is wanting forgiveness just self-serving? And if forgiveness never comes, what then? Finally, the eight perform the ending they have crafted and return to the real world. A profound exploration of the human heart, this story shakes readers to their core—a novel for anyone who has ever hurt someone.

**Ken Ogido:** Born in 1994, he is a winner of the Shincho Mystery Award for *The Bird of Feigned Wounds Cannot Be Caught (Gisho no Tori ha Tukamaranai)*, recipient of the Mystery Writers of Japan Award for *Nightland*, and shortlisted for the Naoki Prize for *The Insatiable Landscape (Akunaki Chikei)*.

# *Manul the Cat Who Quit Being Human Reads Your Life*

Author : **Hatsuki Oto**




Publication: November 2023
255 pages

**Rights sold:**
Thai, Italian

**Agent:**
English Agency Japan/
New River Literary Ltd.
(World, excluding Asia)

**Keywords:**
fortune-telling cat, café, finding oneself, laid-back philosophy

## A fortune-telling cat helps weary people rediscover how to live.

## A warm, episodic café novel offering light humor and gentle emotional healing.

In a quiet corner of the city sits a slightly retro, soothing café. There, you'll find Manul— a stout little cat who speaks human language. Once a human herself, Manul one day declared, "I'm done being human. It's exhausting," and transformed into a cat. Now she spends her days in the café offering fortune readings from her cozy corner.

The story unfolds as an episodic series featuring five individuals, each struggling with their own personal crossroads:

- An influencer who becomes trapped in the gap between her curated online persona and her real self
- A single mother whose perfectionism drives both herself and those around her to the brink
- A high school girl who hides what she loves in order to fit in, gradually losing sight of who she is
- A fortune teller with genuine ability but no confidence in it
- An office worker caught between workplace pressures and personal relationships, unable to move forward

Manul offers neither profound wisdom nor dramatic revelations. Instead, her advice is surprisingly offhand: "Don't overthink it." "Relax a little." "Just do what you like." At times lazy, at times disarmingly casual, her words gently unravel the emotional knots her visitors have tied themselves into. In the final chapter, a former colleague from Manul's human past reappears, revealing why she chose to leave humanity behind.

With its light, humorous tone, the novel quietly explores enduring themes—can people truly change, and what does it mean to live authentically? Long after reading, it leaves a soft, uplifting sense of release.

**Hatsuki Oto:** Winner of the Special Prize at the Starts Publishing Character Novel Awards. This work received the Gold Prize at the KaBoS Collection 2026, organized by Katsuki bookstores.

# *The Tidy Up*

## Author : Tsukiko Ochi




Publication: January 2023
239 pages

**➡English synopsis and sample translation available**

**Keywords:**
tidying up, organizing one's life, intergenerational friendship, preparing for death

### A danshari (decluttering) novel about discovering what truly matters in life.

Asa, a woman on the verge of turning forty, lives alone on her late mother's inheritance. Though financially secure, she remains emotionally distant from society, carrying deep scars from a childhood marked by neglect and a chaotic home environment.

One rainy day, Asa encounters her elderly neighbor, Yae, who has lost her key. This chance meeting leads Asa into Yae's apartment—an overwhelming space filled with clutter and garbage. Despite Yae's abrasive personality and sharp tongue, Asa reluctantly agrees to help her clean up.

What begins as a reluctant task gradually turns into something more meaningful. Drawing on her past experience working at a lifestyle goods store, Asa slowly brings order to the apartment. Along the way, she comes to realize that decluttering is not simply about cleaning, but about making choices—what to keep, and what to let go.

As the work progresses, Yae's past gradually comes to light. Her blunt yet insightful words quietly challenge Asa, helping her confront the emotional barriers she has long carried. Without overstepping boundaries, the two women form a relationship built on mutual trust. Blending emotional storytelling with practical tips on danshari (decluttering), this novel gently explores the process of putting one's life in order.

**Tsukiko Ochi:** Ochi made her literary debut in 2006 with *There's Something not Quite Rights with Me (Kyou no Watashi wa, Douka Shite Iru)*. Her other works include *Eight Minutes from Kamakura Station*, *Vacancies Available (Kamakura Eki Toho Happunn, Akishitsu Ari)*, among many others.

# *Cats don't Laugh*

## Author : Kosuke Mukai




Publication: September 2018
191 pages

**Rights sold:**
Italian, French

**Agent:**
Bureau des Copyrights Français (World, excluding Asia)

**➡English synopsis and sample translation available**

**Keywords:**
aging cat, love and separation, former lovers, loss and grief

### Former lovers come together again to nurse their dying cat—and rediscover what love has left behind.

Hayakawa, a screenwriter, and Renko, a film director, were once in a relationship. After their breakup several years ago, they have each moved on with their separate lives.

One day, the quiet distance between them is broken when they learn that Son, the cat they once raised together, is nearing the end of its life. At Renko's request, Hayakawa begins visiting her home to help care for the ailing cat. There, he is confronted with her present life—one she now shares with her husband—where past and present coexist in a delicate, uneasy balance.

As they spend their days watching the cat slowly decline, memories resurface. Hayakawa begins to reflect on the time they once shared, and on the quiet reasons their relationship came to an end.

The cat says nothing. It simply exists—and will soon be gone.Yet its presence brings to the surface unspoken emotions and unfinished relationships that neither of them has been able to fully leave behind.

Through love, misalignment, and inevitable separation, the story follows the characters as they face a slowly approaching ending—and, in doing so, begin to consider what it means to move forward. This is a story about the end of a relationship, and at the same time, a quiet hope that one might be able to love again.

**Kosuke Mukai:** Mukai is an acclaimed screenwriter known for numerous films, including *A Man*, for which he won the Japan Academy Prize for Best Screenplay. This is his first work of fiction.

# *The Mystery Storage series*

## Author : Junko Oyama




**A moving collection of stories set in a mysterious shop that keeps what matters most for 100 yen a day.**

**The series has sold around 400,000 copies in Japan.**

"We'll take anything off you for 100 yen a day." Sato Storage stands in a remote corner of a shopping district in old downtown Tokyo. The owner is a quiet man who runs his business with discretion. All the items his customers leave with him —such as a bag, a typewriter or even a single sheet of paper—have their own stories behind them.This is a poignant collection of interconnected short stories.

Publication: May 2013
223 pages

**Junko OYAMA :** Started out as a screenwriter, winning the Kido Prize in 2006 for *Tale of the Night of the Crescent Moon* and the Hakodate Harbor Illumination Film Festival Scenario Grand Prize for *Woman at the Wake* in 2008. In 2011 she was awarded the TBS • Kodansha Drama Original Story Award for *Nekoben: Ransom for a Corpse*, her debut novel. Among the author's other works is *To Slay the Beast.. (Akai Kutsu)*.

### Rights sold:

Korean,
simplified Chinese,
traditional Chinese,
Spanish, Thai

### Agent:

Emily Books Agency
(World, excluding East Asia)

### Keywords:

memory, secrets,
emotional journeys,
hidden stories,
connection

### Further volumes in the series




*The Mystery Storage:*
*The Young Kirishima*




*The Mystery Storage:*
*Her Blue Bird*




*The Mystery Storage:*
*Phantom Fried Rice*




*The Mystery Storage:*
*A Sky Full of Stars*

# *The Little Tokyo Flower Shop*

## Author : Yukihisa Yamamoto




Publication: March 2023
315 pages

**Rights sold:**
Arabic, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil and Portugal), Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovic, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian

### A heartfelt story set in a flower shop, which sold around 110,000 copies in Japan.

At 24, Kikuko Kimina is emotionally and physically drained from the demands of her job. One day she meets a woman named Rita Tojima, a warm and energetic florist, at a restaurant at night. In a drunken impulse, Kikuko agrees to start working at her flower shop.

There, Kikuko meets a group of unique coworkers who welcome her into their world of blooms and miracles. As Kikuko learns the language of flowers, she begins to understand the unspoken emotions of the customers who visit the shop or call for flower delivery—some seeking joy, others carrying quiet sorrow.

Each bouquet holds a story, a wish, a moment of healing. From the graceful *Magnolia grandiflora*, symbolizing dignity, to the hopeful *Sunflower*, and the bittersweet farewell of the *Chrysanthemum*, every chapter unveils a tale woven with the delicate meanings of flowers.

Through these encounters, Kikuko slowly starts to heal, rediscovering her own dreams and the small joys that make life beautiful.




Publication January 2026
323 pages

**Agent:**
Vicki Satlow Agency
(World, excluding Asia)

**➡English synopsis and sample translation available**

### The Little Tokyo Flower Shop
### *What a Flower Shop Dreams of*

Midori, a fine arts student, works part-time at a flower shop while struggling to decide her future. Torn between doubts about her talent and the pressures of finding a job, she finds herself interacting with customers who come in search of flowers—each carrying their own stories and emotions. Through these encounters, Midori gradually begins to reflect on what she truly wants to do with her life.

**Yukihisa Yamamoto:** Born in 1966, Tokyo. He made his debut in 2003 when he received Shosetsu Subaru New Writers' Award for *A Beckoning Cat Laughs (Warau manekineko)*. In 2018, his novel *Lots of Store Managers (Tencho ga Ippai)* won the Station Bookstore Award.

# *Days at the Wakeatte Inn*

## Author : Satoshi Yagisawa




Publication: February 2026
299 pages

**Rights sold:**
Catalan, English, French, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Spanish, German, Greek, traditional Chinese, Arabic

**Agent:**
Emily Books Agency (World, excluding East Asia)

**Keywords:**
guesthouse, comforting meals, healing, plants

**★The second volume is planned for release**

**From the author of the international bestseller *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* comes a heartwarming tale of reflection and renewal, set in a quiet guesthouse at the foot of a mountain.**

At the foot of a quiet mountain stands a small inn called Guesthouse Wakeatte—a name that hints at hidden stories. According to the taxi driver who brings guests there, the owners have their own reasons for running the place.

Visitors arrive with uncertainty, but soon find themselves drawn into the warm, unhurried rhythm of the guesthouse. Through the gentle hospitality of the owners, the comforting meals they prepare, and the heartfelt conversations they share, guests begin to reflect on their own hectic lives. One by one, they rediscover the strength to take a step forward.

The guesthouse is run by a couple with their own complicated pasts: the wife, who once fled from a painful marriage, and the husband, a former botanist who now writes columns while helping run the inn. Though they carry emotional baggage, their sincerity and charm create a healing space for all who visit.

Each chapter introduces a new guest and a new story, gradually revealing the quiet magic of the guesthouse and its owners. The husband's reflections on the relationship between plants and people offer a deeper message: the importance of living in the present while accepting the things we cannot change.

In Japanese, the phrase "wakeatte" carries a dual meaning. On one hand, it implies that someone or something has a hidden reason or backstory—often suggesting a complicated past. On the other hand, it can also evoke the idea of sharing something with others, such as feelings, experiences, or even burdens.

This layered meaning adds depth to the title, suggesting both that the guesthouse owners and visitors have personal stories, and that they come together to share warmth, understanding, and healing. This is a heartwarming tale about rest, renewal, and the quiet strength found in everyday life.

**Satoshi Yagiaswa:** Born in 1977, he made his debut with *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, a novel that was later adapted into a film. With its sequel, *More Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, the series is currently being translated into over 30 languages worldwide, and the English edition was nominated for the 2024 British Book Awards in the Debut Fiction category. His other works include *the Days at the Torunka Café* series. He enjoys playing the guitar and loves coffee and cats.

NEW

# *Aoi in the Orchard*

## Author : Hitsuji Tomoi




Publication: November 2026
Estimated length:
299 pages

**➡English synopsis available**

**Keywords:**
everyday mysteries, island life, seasonal fruits

**A heartwarming novel that blends everyday mysteries surrounding food with a young girl's journey toward healing and self-discovery, from the author of the bestselling *Shizuku's Breakfast Mystery Soup Shop* series.**

One winter day, fourteen-year-old Aoi loses both of her parents in a fatal drunk-driving accident and finds herself completely alone. The following spring, she is taken in by her maternal uncle, Tori, who lives on a warm island where fruit trees flourish throughout the year. In the orchard surrounding his home, each season brings different harvests and new discoveries.

In spring, Tori succeeds in recreating the marmalade recipe that was one of Aoi's late mother's treasured family flavors. In summer, Aoi helps deliver bread for a local bakery and becomes more connected to the island community.

Autumn brings a new friendship with Erisa, a girl who dreams of becoming a narrator. In winter, a strange series of incidents sweeps the island as lost belongings begin mysteriously returning to their owners. The truth points to Anna, the mother of one of Aoi's friends, who has been secretly stealing the items.

Across the four seasons, Aoi becomes involved in a series of everyday mysteries, each centered on a different fruit. The story also features a dramatic twist: readers are led to believe that Aoi's parents were victims of the fatal accident, only to discover in the climax that her father was, in fact, the one responsible for causing it. Combining gentle mysteries, emotional family drama, and a moving portrait of a young girl's growth, this is a deeply affecting and unforgettable story.

**Hitsuji Tomoi:** Made his debut in 2012 with *I Will Sue My Father (Boku ha Otosan wo Uttaemasu)*, which received the Excellence Award in The Konomys Mystery Prize. He has written numerous works, including the popular *Shizuku's Breakfast Mystery Soup Shop (Soupya Shizuku no Nazotoki Asagohan)* series.

NEW

# *Grandma in the Labyrinth*

## Author : Inujun




**A heartwarming novel by a professional dementia care manager, who brings authenticity to the struggles of people living with dementia and their families while transforming them into an entertaining and uplifting story.**

Mai Aoyama is twenty-two years old and drifting through life as a part-time worker. When her parents unexpectedly find themselves on the verge of a late-life divorce, she moves into the home of her paternal grandmother, Midori whom she hasn't seen for ten years. During a recent hospital stay for a fractured bone, Midori was diagnosed with dementia. Depending on the day, Midori may not even recognize her granddaughter, and her personality has changed as her dementia progresses.

Yet her caring nature remains intact. Before long, the two find themselves solving a series of neighborhood mysteries. Somehow, Midori, who was once an avid reader of mystery novels, always manages to identify the culprit through her wildly unconventional logic, while Mai helps connect the dots and make sense of her conclusions. Together, they become an unforgettable detective duo.

Mai initially struggles to accept the reality of caring for her grandmother. As they spend more time together, however, she realizes that Midori is fully aware of her own condition and is sometimes quietly devastated by the gradual loss of her memories.

One day, they discover that a real-estate company is attempting to acquire the homes of elderly people living alone in the neighborhood. Midori exposes the company as a fraudulent operation and prevents a vulnerable resident from being tricked into selling their home. Overnight, the grandmother-and-granddaughter team becomes the talk of the town. Through these adventures, Mai comes to understand something precious: even as dementia erases memories, her grandmother's love for her remains unchanged.

Written by an author with firsthand experience in dementia care, this heartwarming mystery portrays people living with dementia and their families with warmth, humor, and compassion. At once entertaining and thought-provoking, it sheds light on the challenges of an aging society while celebrating the enduring bonds between generations.

**Inujun:** Won the Shizuoka Book Award for *To You Who Will Disappear This Winter (Kono Fuyu, Inakunaru Kimihe)*. Other works include *The Day I Fall Asleep Someday (Itsuka, Nemuri ni Tsuku Hi)*, the author's debut novel, which was later adapted for screen, as well as numerous other bestselling titles.

Publication: October 2026
Estimated length :
362 pages

**➡English synopsis available**

**Keywords:**
grandmother–granddaughter duo, dementia, small-town mystery, memory and identity

NEW

# *The Eyes*

Author : **Sesuji**




Publication: June 2026
71 pages

**Rights sold:**
Korean, traditional Chinese

**Agent:**
Tuttle-Mori Agency
(World, excluding Asia)

**Keywords:**
being watched, fear of observation, psychological horror, desire for attention

## A bestselling horror novel exploring the terrifying power of "the gaze."

We are constantly aware of being watched—and yet, we also crave it. Humans live with this contradiction: fearing how others perceive us, while exposing our lives to countless strangers on social media.The gaze is a mirror that reflects the desires and fears of the one being seen. What, then, do we truly perceive through the eyes of others?

This collection presents four interconnected chilling stories centered on the power of "the gaze." In the first story, I, a university student researching the phenomenon of the "pressure of being watched." In the second story, M accepts a highly paid surveillance job. As she watches a man staying alone in a hotel room, she gradually realizes that she, too, is being observed by an unseen presence.

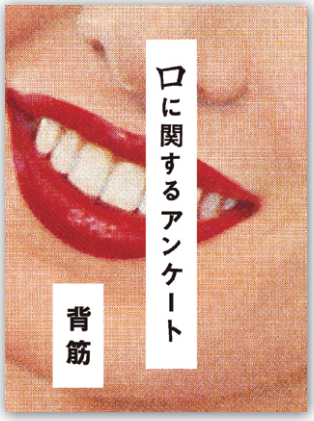
In the third story, Itsuki, a university student, tries to uncover why his girlfriend Asuka has become obsessed with the belief that "earning enough points will get you into heaven." In the final story, a message from the suddenly vanished Asuka connects all the seemingly unrelated events. The truth behind the terror of watching and being watched is finally revealed.

Known for his expertise in mockumentary-style horror, the author skillfully blurs the line between reality and fiction, creating unsettling narratives that feel disturbingly real.

**Sesuji:** His debut novel *About a Place in the Kinki Region* ranked first in the 2024 edition of *This Horror Is Amazing!*, while *A Questionnaire on the Mouth* ranked fourth in the 2025 edition. Both titles have been adapted into films.

# *A Questionnaire on the Mouth*

Author : **Sesuji**




Publication: September 2024
63 pages

**Rights sold:**
Indonesian, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, traditional Chinese

**➡English sample translation available**

**Agent:**
Tuttle-Mori Agency (World, excluding Asia)

**Keywords:**
short horror story, “the Mouth” as the source of misfortune

**A chilling bestseller with around 450,000 copies sold in Japan, depicting a group of university students who visit a notorious haunted spot.**

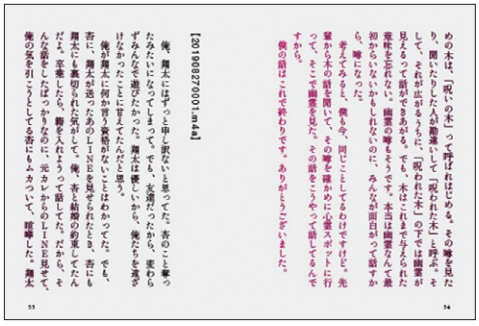
**Adapted into a film and ranked No.4 in the 2025 edition of *This Horror is Amazing!***

Deep in the mountains, a small, secluded cemetery has long been known as a haunted spot. And there is an ancient tree that predates the cemetery itself—referred to as the cursed tree. Locals whisper that the spirits of the buried emerge from beneath it. One summer night, a group of university students visits the site for a thrill, treating it as a casual test of courage. But what awaits them is a horrifying experience they will never forget.

This is a chilling and unconventional short novel, which blends ghostly rumors, a long-haired woman, the deafening buzz of cicadas, and tangled romantic tensions. Told through multiple perspectives, the story weaves psychological darkness and distorted relationships into a tightly packed narrative.

Published in a format smaller than a smartphone, the book features a unique design: as the story unfolds, the text color gradually shifts to the color of blood. Follow the unsettling experience all the way to the final page, where a mysterious “questionnaire” awaits.

**Sesuji:** His debut novel *About a Place in the Kinki Region* ranked first in the 2024 edition of *This Horror Is Amazing!,* while *A Questionnaire on the Mouth* ranked fourth in the 2025 edition. Both titles have been adapted into films.





# *Kuma Kuma chan the Little Bear*

Author : **Kazue Takahashi**



**A long selling series that captures the hearts of adult readers with its gentle, unhurried sense of time.**

Kuma Kuma Chan is expressionless—and irresistibly cute. He lives alone in a tiny house deep in the mountains. Far from the hustle and bustle, he knows how to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. This popular series follows his days filled with the quiet charm of "ordinary" moments.




Publication: January 2017
51 pages

**Rights sold:**
Italian, French

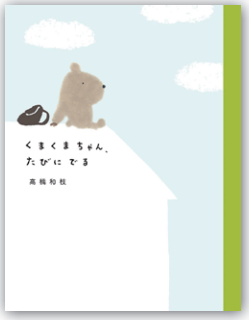
**➡English sample translation available**

**Keywords:**
a gentle sense of time, small joys, a simple way of life



## *Kuma Kuma Chan's House*

Kuma Kuma Chan invites a friend over. Their conversation doesn't quite flow, but he welcomes the guest with slightly awkward yet warmhearted hospitality.



## *Kuma Kuma Chan Goes on a Journey*

From time to time, Kuma Kuma Chan travels. He dozes on a southern island, sips coffee on a mountain at dawn… and yet, some days he simply doesn't feel like traveling.. On such days, he simply lies on the roof of his house and gazes up at the sky.

**Kazue Takahashi:** After working as a designer at a stationery manufacturer, Takahashi became an illustrator and picture-book artist.



POPLAR
PUBLISHING

Foreign Rights Catalog 2026

Design: Mihoko Takahashi (POPLAR Publishing)