



# POPLAR 2018



## About Us

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POPLAR Publishing Co., Ltd., a leading independent publisher of children's books in Japan, has been in business for more than 70 years. As it started as a children's books publisher, it has always tried to provide children with enjoyable and exciting books. Today, the company's goals remain unchanged: everything it publishes should be enjoyable and enrich people's lives.

To date, POPLAR Publishing Co., Ltd. has published many best-selling picture book series, which have sold more than one million copies, including "the Little Mouse" and "Hide & Seek." It has also published long-selling storybook series, such as "Kaiketsu Zorori" and "Let's Go! Zukkoke Trio." Moreover, the company launched an encyclopedia series, "POPLARDIA," in 2002 and an illustrated reference book series, "WONDA," in 2012.

Furthermore, POPLAR Publishing Co., Ltd. expanded by publishing books for adults, including fiction, non-fiction, essays and business books, in 2000.

Several works of fiction, such as "The Restaurant of Love Regained" and "Midnight Bakery" series, have sold nearly one million copies and have been made into a TV drama and film. POPLAR Publishing Co., Ltd. publishes around 500 titles annually, and many of its titles have been licensed to foreign countries.



## Contact

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# Kuma-Kuma Chan's Travels

Kazue Takahashi



172 x 133 mm

52 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591152966

Rights sold: Canada, China  
and The United States

This is the third installment in the *Kuma-Kuma Chan* series, which has won a wide following in Japan, especially among women, and is now spreading its fan base elsewhere in Asia, Europe, and the United States through translations. The main character in the series is Kuma-Kuma, a cute and cuddly bear (*kuma* means “bear” in Japanese) who lives by himself in the mountains and likes to go on trips from time to time. The stories are narrated by his penpal, a city boy who doesn’t always understand the things Kuma-Kuma relates in his letters.

Kuma-Kuma flies off to a south sea isle to lie in the sun and drift into a lazy snooze . . . (turn page) . . . in his imagination. He climbs to the summit of a mountain to view the sunrise while drinking a fresh-brewed cup of coffee . . . (turn page) . . . in the story that he is writing. He flies up into the sky like a bird and looks down on the earth below . . . (turn page) . . . in anticipation of which, he makes a point of getting to know birds better now. He travels back to before he was born to find out what kind of animal he was in a previous life . . . in his dreams. Instead of physically setting out for one place or another, he travels freely all over the world inside his head. But there are also days when he finds it impossible to travel even in this way, in which case he climbs up onto the roof and lies gazing up at the ever-changing clouds and passing birds all day long.

Kuma-Kuma writes down his travel accounts and sends them to his narrator friend, but he scrawls them out in such a hurry that the boy has trouble reading the writing. The boy is left to imagine for himself where Kuma-Kuma is traveling and what transpires there. The story ends as he looks forward to the day when he will get to see Kuma-Kuma again—somewhere on his travels.



**Kuma-Kuma Chan,  
the Little Bear**



**Little Kuma-Kuma Chan's  
Home**

## About the Author

Kazue Takahashi (1971–) made her debut as a picture-book author with *Kuma-Kuma Chan The Little Bear* in 2001, and also works as an illustrator for other authors. Her picture books include *Nyāko the Cat*, *The Squirrel Telephone System*, *Little Bear Sees In the New Year*, and *Rainy Day Bear*. Titles she has illustrated include *Tell Me a Story* (text by Kyoko Hara) and *Somebody's Canvas Bag* (story by Miyako Moriyama). <http://kumanekonikki.jugem.jp>

# The Ferocious Hungry Bear

Yasushi Tsukamoto



Ages 5+

257 x 222 mm

32 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591155523

Rights sold:

*Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!* One day a ferocious hungry bear comes pounding down out of the mountains toward town. Famished, he is on a hunt for something to eat. When he spots a carpenter bee buzzing his way he tries to catch it, since carpenter bees are one of his favorite foods. He ties himself in knots in the effort, but the bee ultimately gets away.

Hungry Bear continues on toward town, where he finds an old man sipping a cup of steaming hot tea in front of his house. Oh, no! What's going to happen to him? But instead of panicking, the old man quickly offers Hungry Bear some acorns from his back yard—another of the animal's favorite treats. Lo and behold, it turns out that the ferocious Hungry Bear is actually only a tiny bear cub. After Hungry Bear eats his fill of acorns, the old man wraps some more in a handkerchief and ties it around his neck so he can take them home with him. "Thank you, old man," thinks the bear as he starts back to the mountains.

Hungry Bear had had to come down from the mountains because loggers had taken away so many trees and made it hard for him to find food. "It's all people's fault," thinks the old man.

In bold, dynamic artwork and through very simple text, author Yasushi Tsukamoto addresses the natural balance between animals and the environment they depend upon for food—shining a light on the harm caused by human destruction of their natural habitat.



## About the Author

Yasushi Tsukamoto (1965–) was born in Tokyo. He works not only as an illustrator but as a picture-book author in his own right; he is also an essayist. His picture books include *Retasu no ehon* (The Book of Lettuce), *Kono sushi nāni* (What's This Sushi?), *Hashire! Yakinikun* (Get in Shape, Yakinikun!), and *Aisu sukēto pengin* (Penguin On Skates). His collaborations with Shuntarō Tanikawa include *Sono ko* (The Other Boy), *Futari onaji hoshi no ue de* (Two Girls Living on the Same Planet), and *Shinde kureta* (Died for Me).



# He Made Me Want to Hurry Home

Text by **Yuichi Kimura**

Illus. by **Tsuga Takeuchi**



Ages 5+

217 x 265 mm

32 pages

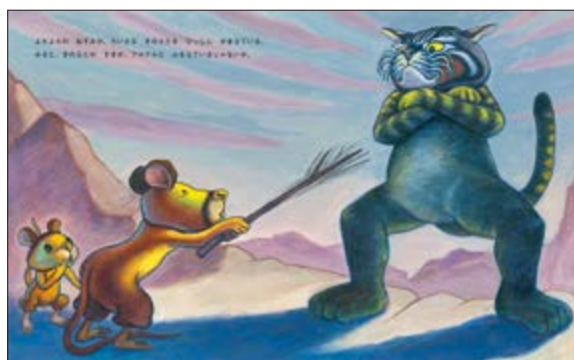
Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591155127

Rights sold: China and Korea

Daddy Wildcat is on his way home to his wife and son, thinking with great satisfaction about how much his son admires him, when he spots a tasty-looking mouse trying to make himself scarce. Licking his chops, he is about to pounce, when the little creature cries out with great bravado, “I’m not scared of you!” and declares that if the wildcat tries to eat him, “My daddy will teach you a lesson!” As the wildcat scoffs that a mouse’s father is still just a mouse, Daddy Mouse appears. He looks ineffectual and weak compared to the wildcat, but he boldly steps between the boy and the fierce beast, brandishing a small stick in front of him. Even though the tip of the stick is trembling noticeably, the wildcat finds himself identifying with Daddy Mouse’s desire to protect his son. When Daddy Mouse finally screws up his courage and takes a swing at him, the stick barely pricks his toe, but the wildcat lets out an exaggerated yelp and takes to his heels. As he races away, Daddy Wildcat says to himself, “He made me want to hurry home and see my son.”

The spare dialogue and the bold and vibrant artwork exquisitely express the unevenness of the contest between the two fathers, as well as the emotional progressions they each go through during the face-off. The younger mouse’s confidence in his father, briefly shaken when he see the stick quavering, is re-affirmed when the wildcat turns tail. Both fathers’ great love for their sons comes through loud and clear despite their sharply contrasting circumstances.



## About the Author

Yuichi Kimura (1948–) is a native of Tokyo and graduate of Tama Art University. He worked in art education and as an idea man for children’s programming on TV before becoming a children’s book author. His work spans picture books and nursery tales for younger children, chapter books for older ages, plays, comics, and more. Many of his stories address aspects of friendship, a theme of keen interest to children, and because he is realistic in his approach, rather than merely emphasizing harmony, he strikes a chord with his young readers. In addition to *Arashi no yoru ni* (*One Stormy Night . . .*, tr. 2003) and its sequels, his major titles include *Ningen gokko* (*Playing People*); *Inai inai bā asobi* (*Peekaboo Game*) and the *Akachan no asobi ehon* (*Baby’s Play Books*) series of which it is part; *Dō suru dō suru ana no naka* (*How Can We Get Out of the Hole?*); and a collection of nursery stories he himself selected, *Kimura Yūichi ohanashi no heya* (*Yūichi Kimura’s Chamber of Tales*). Tsuga Takeuchi (1957–) was born in Nagano Prefecture. A graduate of the Woodblock Print Department of the Sōkei Academy of Fine Art & Design, he worked as an illustrator before becoming a children’s book author at age 39. His vibrant artwork and slightly comical stories have made him a favorite among young readers. Picture-book titles he has illustrated include *Erai erai!* (*Bravo Bravo!*), *Bukyabukya bū* (*Oinky Boink Boink*), *Guruguru Gurupon* (*Gurupon, the Child Wizard*), and *Henteko resutoran* (*A Collection of Very Funny Restaurants*).

# The Animal Buses and the Lost Item

Shiho Kotera



Ages 3+

207 x 290 mm

32 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591154717

Rights sold:

The “Funny Animal Bus” characters created and popularized by stationery and fancy goods maker Q-Lia, and subsequently turned into an animation series on Japanese TV, are here adapted to the picture-book form for the first time. The marvelously endearing characters are both animal and vehicle at the same time. In this story, young trainees still studying to become full-fledged buses that can carry passengers step up to deliver a lost item to its owner.

The central character is Fanfan—a young panda bus. He may be a bit of a scatterbrain, but he tries harder than anyone else, and he’s popular among his peers. As he heads to school each day, he vows to do his very best so he can become a fully qualified bus as soon as possible. At school, he and the other trainees study the rules of the road and practice on an off-road driver’s training course to get the hang of S-curves, uphill starts, and such. For today’s final period, they get to go out onto the regular streets for the first time, and when they pass by the transit center they find Dartan the elephant bus looking down in the dumps. One of his passengers left a round, slightly concave object behind, and he’s at a loss as to what to do with it. The trainees help him figure out that it’s a cymbal, and that it must belong to a member of the village orchestra he transported to the mountaintop concert hall earlier. Realizing somebody needs to deliver it back up the mountain before the concert is scheduled to begin, Fanfan tucks the cymbal inside his passenger compartment and dashes off. The other trainees follow close behind in case he needs help. The mountain road is an extremely difficult route, and Fanfan encounters various obstacles that slow his progress. The worst is when he starts across a bridge without realizing it has been washed away in the middle, and falls into the water. He fears all his efforts will come to naught, but then a hippo bus rescues him from the water and the other trainees find another route where the bridge is intact. They help him up the final steep climb to the top by pushing him from behind.

Thanks to his friends’ help, Fanfan delivers the cymbal to its distraught owner at the concert hall just in the nick of time. To the villagers’ delight, the show can go on, with even the animal buses joining in on stage.



©Animalbus Partners

## About the Author

Shiho Kotera (1991–) was born in Toyama Prefecture. In 2013 she joined Q-Lia, where she has been engaged in designing stationery and fancy goods. In 2014, the doodle of a “panda bus” she drew in her sketchbook inspired a cast of “Funny Animal Bus” characters that also became an animated television series (with two seasons as of 2017). Cats are her favorite animal. Her published titles include *Animaru basu to wasuremono* (The Animal Buses and the Lost Item).

# Spook Train

Text by **Masatoshi Nakao**

Illus. by **Dolly**



Ages 3+

264 x 214 mm

32 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591155318

Rights sold: Taiwan

A young boy of elementary-school age is going on his first long train trip by himself, to visit his grandparents who live in a remote mountain village called Ryūjin. He boards the train as the departure bell rings, only to discover that all the other passengers as well as the conductors are *yōkai* (supernatural creatures). As he is wondering what might happen, a *tengu* (long-nosed goblin) conductor appears to say that a human has apparently snuck aboard the train, and he intends to find him.

The boy uses his quick wits to avoid being discovered by the first and second conductors who come through, but in spite of his efforts to disguise himself as an ogre, his luck runs out with the third. “You must be the human,” says the giant toad, and as the *yōkai* passengers close in around him, the boy is forced to admit that he’s the one. Then to his surprise, the weird creatures all break into smiles and lift him onto their shoulders with shouts of *Wasshoi! Wasshoi!* It turns out that Ryūjin village is a gathering spot for spooks from all around the world because of its still-pristine natural surroundings. In days gone by, *yōkai* and human children played together there, but in recent times such opportunities have grown scarce. So the *yōkai* are all delighted to have a human child in their midst again. Soon the train arrives in Ryūjin. When the boy’s grandfather welcomes him to the village, the ghostly creatures apparently are not visible to him. The boy surreptitiously whispers to his new friends, “Let’s play again tomorrow!”

Young children are fascinated by *yōkai*. But boarding a train to find the coach teeming with them might still be pretty scary. The story walks a tightrope between that fascination and fear. At its center is a city boy making his first solo trip to visit his grandparents in a remote village just like the one where author Masatoshi Nakao’s own grandparents lived. In spite of its supernatural content, the story expresses the true essence of Japan with both humor and pathos.

## About the Author

Masatoshi Nakao (1982-) was born in Wakayama Prefecture. He was working in the production of educational TV programs when he made his debut as a picture-book author in 2012 with *Urenai yakisoba pan* (The Yakisoba Sandwich Nobody Wants; illustrated by Inunco, co-authored by Mai Tominaga). His other titles include *Dondon kuru kuru* (It Keeps Coming and Coming; illustrated by Akiko Iwata); *Yōkai bā* (Kooky Creature Boo!), written with Mariko Ishikawa under the creative-team name Soratobu Enban (“Flying Saucer”); and *Zōkin resurā* (Rag Tag Wrestlers), illustrated by Masanori Inui. In 2016 he received the Wakayama Picture Book Grand Prize for *Itterasshai Unchi-kun* (Goodbye, Mr. Poopy), another collaboration with Masanori Inui.

Dolly (1986-) was born in Osaka and graduated from Kyoto Seika University. She works as an illustrator and manga artist, and also as a cut-paper artist. Picture books she has provided the artwork for include *Dōbutsu mazekeze asobi* (Mix-and-Match Animal Fun!), *Dōbutsu senryū: Boku dāre?* (Animal Senryū: What Am I?), *Dōbutsu rensō: Sore dāre?* (Animal Associations: Who Do You Think?), and *Ma, ikka!* (It’s All Right!).



# Jump!

Tatsuhide Matsuoka



Ages 0+

155 x 155 mm

36 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591064764

Rights sold: Argentina,

Canada, China, France,

Korea, New Zealand, Russia,

Taiwan, The United Kingdom,

and The United States and

Vietnam

Turn the pages to see all kinds of animals jumping high in this delightful book that has sold 620,000 copies in Japan.

A frog jumps. A kitten jumps. A dog jumps—wow, that's high! A grasshopper jumps, a rabbit jumps, then a snail . . . oops, no luck. A chicken leaps with its chick, a fish splashes out of the water, and last comes a little girl to join in the fun, too.

The volume is the first in the “My First Adventure” series by Tatsuhide Matsuoka, one of Japan's leading authors of scientific picture books. While the animals' movements are comical and bring a chuckle, they're also accurately rendered, so young readers will enjoy themselves and get a taste of science.



## About the Author

Tatsuhide Matsuoka (1944–) has been one of Japan's foremost illustrators specializing in the natural sciences. He won a Japan Picture Book Award in 1981 for *The Neptune Beetle of the Amazon* (text by Yoshitake Suzuki); the Japan Science Book Award in 1993 for *Jungle*; and the Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award in 2009 for *Illustrated Guide to Woodland Fun*.

# Who is Hiding ?

Satoru Onishi



Colorful cut-paper figures of 18 different animals line up on the first spread, each identified by its name: dog, tiger, hippopotamus, zebra, bear, reindeer, and so forth. From the next spread, the same animals are shown again, with one of them crying, angry, hiding, or standing with its back to the reader.

At the top of the page is the simple question, “Who is crying/angry/hiding/looking the other way/etc.?” Very young readers will enjoy the guessing game, searching for the animal prompted by each question.

Ages 3+  
 245 x 215 mm  
 32 pages  
 Hardcover  
 ISBN 978-4591012574  
 Rights sold: Australia,  
 Canada, China, France,  
 Germany, Korea, New  
 Zealand, Taiwan, The  
 Netherlands, The United  
 Kingdom, The United states,  
 Poland, Russia and Vietnam



## About the Author

Satoru Onishi (1955–) graduated from Tama Art College. He works as a professional illustrator, and is the author of *Who Is Hiding?* He produces illustrations and craft projects for magazines.

# Pop!

## Asako Mori

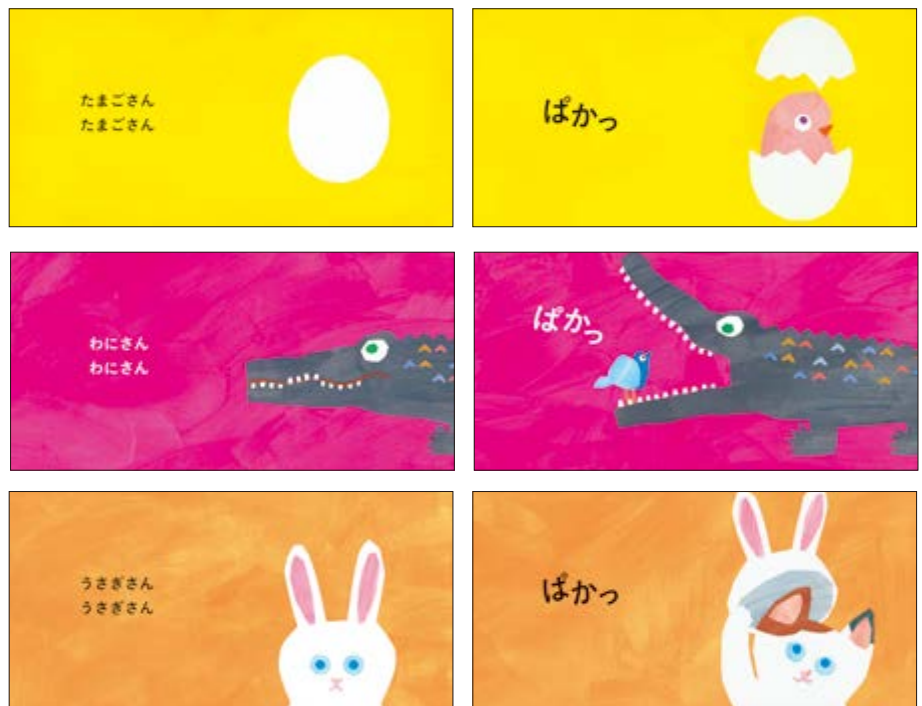


Ages 0+  
177 x 176 mm  
24 pages  
Hardcover  
ISBN 978-4591154878  
Rights sold: China

This picture book is built around the Japanese mimetic word *paka!*, which represents something popping open—with or without an actual popping sound.

The reader opens the book to see a plain white egg standing upright, with text on the facing page calling out, “Dear egg, dear egg.” When she turns the page, the text reads *Paka!* and the top has come off of the egg to show a cute little chick inside. Next comes an alligator, with the text calling out, “Mister Alligator, Mister Alligator.” Turn the page and—*Paka!*—the alligator’s mouth has popped open and a bird is perched on its teeth. A bentō boxed lunch, a bunny rabbit, and a set of dharma dolls follow in the same pattern, each popping open to reveal what’s inside.

Little ones will follow with glee, wondering what will appear next. During production, author Asako Mori had parents read versions of the book with their children to see what would elicit a laugh from, or hold the attention of, the youngest readers. The beautiful pictures rendered in bright colors make it perfect as baby’s first book.

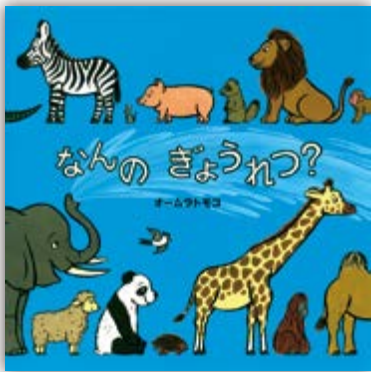


### About the Author

Asako Mori (1975–) was born in Tokyo. She graduated from Joshibi University of Art and Design in 1997. After working as an art designer for video productions, she established herself as an independent illustrator in 2005. In 2011 she published her first picture book, *Ana no naka* (Down the Hole). As the mother of one, she is currently neck-deep in parenting demands.

# Long, Long Line

## Tomoko Ohmura



Ages 3+

227x 226 mm

36 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591110799

Rights sold:

Australia, Canada, China,  
France, Germany, Italy, Korea,  
New Zealand, Poland, Russia,  
Spain, Sweden, Thailand,  
Taiwan, the Netherlands, The  
United Kingdom, The United  
States and Vietnam

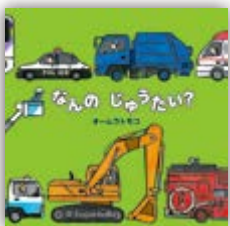
When Frog joins the queue, he is the 50th one in line. In front of him are Lizard and Mouse and Mole . . . and way up ahead at the front is Elephant. From Elephant to Frog, the animals are lined up in order of their size, large to small, all waiting for something to begin.

It turns out that they are all standing on the back of a whale, waiting for a giant “whale-coaster” ride. Monkey and Dog find themselves next to each other and, predictably, are having trouble getting along. Sheep sees Wolf ahead of him in line and hangs back, too scared to move ahead. Some of the animals get tired of waiting and start playing a word-chain game. Then finally the giant whale-coaster heaves into motion . . .

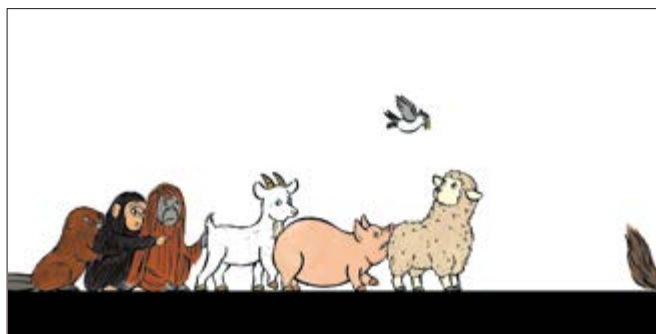
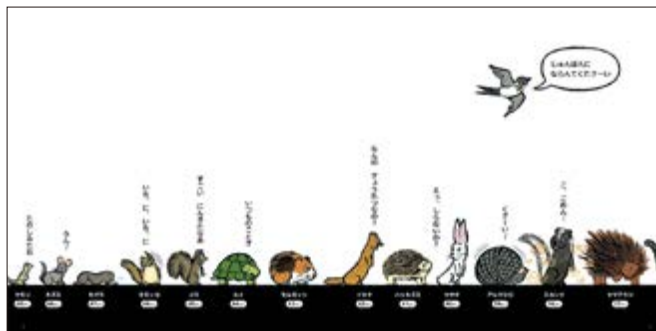
This enjoyable story also serves as an illustrated guide for young readers to learn what each of the 50 animals looks like. As each position in line is numbered, the pages also offer a fun way to learn numbers. In addition, the last thing visible on each spread is the tail of the first animal illustrated on the next page, enabling readers to make a game of guessing which animal comes next. In all, this highly entertaining picture book elicits smiles not just from children but from older readers as well.



What's the Attraction, Insects?



What's the Hold-Up?



### About the Author

Tomoko Ohmura (1973–) graduated from Palette Club School on her way to becoming an illustrator. Her solo picture books include *The Most Amazing Shopping Trip* (winner of the Pinpoint Picture Books Competition in 2002), and *What're We Lining Up for Tonight?* Her collaborations with other authors include the “Cook Your Troubles Away” series, the “Captain Ship” series, the “Food Power” series, and *Field Day*.



# Māsuke the Bear

Noboru Baba



Ages 3+

229 x 187 mm

32 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591154519

Rights sold: China

When Māsuke the Bear comes out of the woods to play in the open fields one day, a balloon comes wafting by on the breeze. He runs in the direction it's headed in an effort to catch it, only to trip over a stump at the last moment and lose it. When he looks up, Mr. Gorilla has caught it with a butterfly net, and is giving it to his little boy. The disappointed Māsuke climbs a tree to see if he can spy any more balloons coming this way.

As he sits on a tree branch gazing hopefully about, Mr. Pig comes by, drawing a cart loaded high with big fat daikon radishes. Suddenly remembering that he has left a basket of grapes behind, Mr. Pig asks Māsuke to watch the cart for him while he goes back to get it. Soon a little tanuki boy and bunny girl come by holding balloons. They volunteer that another one is caught in a tree on the hilltop. Māsuke feels stymied because he's stuck watching the cart, but then it hits him that he can simply take the cart along with him. He sets off for the hill, pulling the cart behind.

When he climbs the tree and creeps out onto a branch to get the balloon, the branch breaks. He crashes down right onto the cart, upsetting it and sending the daikon tumbling into a nearby pond. By the time Mr. Pig comes looking for Māsuke, the dripping daikon are back in the cart. Mr. Pig thinks Māsuke has washed the daikon for him, so he thanks him by giving him a big bunch of juicy grapes from the basket he went back to retrieve.

Māsuke is easygoing and likes to do things at his own pace, but he also wants to be dependable. So when his determined pursuit of the balloon turns out badly, he conscientiously cleans up the mess—and, in a humorous twist, ends up being thanked for doing something helpful instead of getting in trouble for doing something wrong.



Māsuke's Hat



## About the Author

Noboru Baba (1927–2001) was born in Aomori Prefecture. In 1949 he moved to Tokyo to begin a career as a manga artist, soon making a name for himself drawing manga for young boys. His debut as a picture-book illustrator came in 1964, when he won a Sankei Children's Book Award for *Kitsune-mori no yamaotoko* (Mountain Man of Fox Wood). He received another Sankei Children's Book Award in 1968 for *Eleven Hungry Cats* (tr. 1988), and the Bungeishunjū Manga Award in 1973 for *Eleven Cats and Albatrosses* (tr. 1988). His foldout book in the same series, *Jūippiki no neko marason taikai* (Eleven Cats Run the Marathon), won a kids'-choice award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 1985. Other titles include *Kuma no Māsuke* (Māsuke the Bear), *Māsuke no bōshi* (Māsuke's Hat), *Monta to inoshishi* (Monta and the Boar), and *Tarafuku Manma* (Belly Full).

# Wolf Mimic

Tatsuya Miyanishi



Ages 3+

187 x 185 mm

25 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591152553

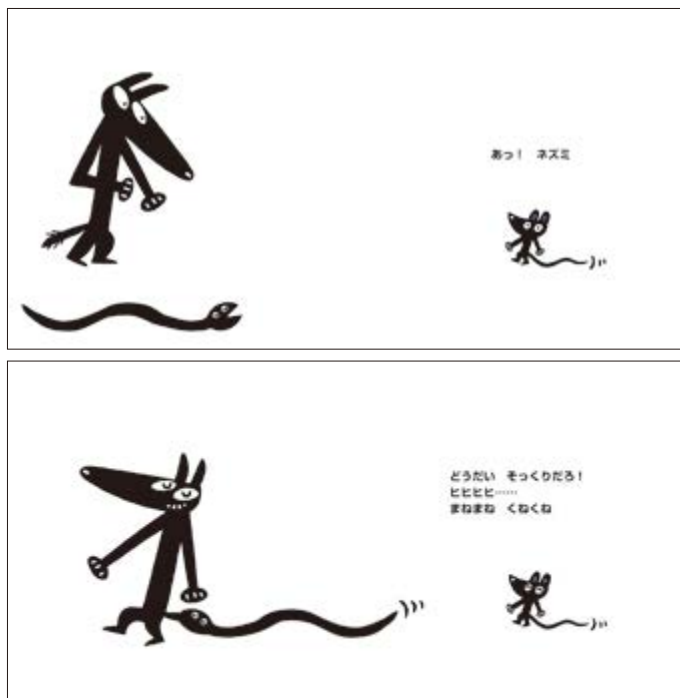
Rights sold: China



Stretchy Wolf

Wolf loves to mimic other animals. He sees a turtle and improvises a rounded shell on his back; he sees a bat and dangles curtains from his arms for wings; sees a panda and marks himself with white paint to match its markings. Next he disguises himself as a snake, followed by a tiny mouse, and then he sees a massive dinosaur. Because of its size, the dinosaur presents a special challenge, but Wolf cleverly mimics several of the bony plates on its back.

The solid black wolf is shown mostly against a plain white background, with a simple splash of color here and there to highlight his tricks. The bold effect helps each element of the artwork stand out clearly even for the youngest eyes—except when the Wolf mimics the dinosaur in such a way as to make him hard to find. In addition to the humorous illustrations, text punctuated with the kind of rhythmical words little ones love to repeat makes it an excellent choice for read-aloud fun.



## About the Author

Tatsuya Miyanishi (1956–) graduated from the Nihon University College of Art, and worked as a doll artist and graphic designer before becoming a picture-book author. His works for children include storybooks as well as *kamishibai* picture-panel stories, and he is also active as an essayist. His distinctive use of bright colors and endearingly drawn characters, together with his signature themes of friendship and family love, have earned him a passionate fan base. A series with 14 titles to date featuring a tyrannosaurus has been particularly popular. He won the 1999 Kodansha Award for Picture Books for *Kyō wa nante un ga iin darō* (It's My Lucky Day!), the 2007 Japan Picture Book Awards Readers' Prize for *Fushigi na kyandīya-san* (The Marvelous Candy Store), and the 2010 Kenbuchi Picture Book Grand Prize for *Chū-chū* (Squeak Squeak). His other works include *Oppai* (Breasts), *Nyāgo* (Meowga), *Otōsan wa Urutoraman* (My Daddy Is Ultraman), and *Omae, umasō da na* (Oh, Yummy!).

# The Bum Detective: The Case of the Brazen Thief

## Troll



Ages 5+

266 x 207 mm

32 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591146743

Rights sold: China Taiwan and  
Korea, Spain and Vietnam

This is the fifth installment in the Oshiri tantei (The Bum Detective) series of picture books featuring a detective with a face like a butt and a brilliant deductive mind.

A cat burglar who styles himself “Master Thief U” brazenly gives advance warnings to the wealthy owners of the treasures he intends to steal. In spite of these notices, no one has ever laid eyes on the mysterious figure. During a special “Ancient Civilizations” exhibition at the Hōhō Museum, a letter arrives from Master Thief U saying that he intends to snatch “The Goddess’s Muffler” that night. The police are at a loss how to protect the radiant, incomparably beautiful scarf that is on display around the neck of a goddess sculpture, so they call in the Bum Detective. The thief appears as promised, and although the Bum Detective sees through his disguise, makes off with the scarf. The Bum Detective pursues him, and thanks to brilliant deduction together with a lucky break for his sidekick Brown the Dog, manages to recover the priceless scarf. The thief himself, however, slips through his grasp.

Along the way are a series of mazes, hidden pictures, and other puzzles, offering additional fun and giving readers the sense that they are helping to solve the mystery.



Vol.6



### About the Author

Troll is a team consisting of writer Yoko Tanaka (1976–) and illustrator Masahide Fukasawa (1981–). Together they produce picture books, illustrations, and application graphics for the iPhone, iPad, and Android. Their first picture book, *Oshiri tantei* (The Bum Detective), has expanded into a multi-volume series. Troll also produces a companion series of readers targeted at the lower grades of elementary school, called *Oshiri tantei fairu* (The Bum Detective Files), which includes *Oshiri tantei: Murasaki fujin no angō jiken* (The Bum Detective: Lady Purple and the Secret Code).



# Precious Red Apples

Text by **Hiiragi Nonaka**

Illus. by **Keiko Matsumoto**



A black and a white rabbit receive a letter that tells them a tree is bearing a lot of apples. They excitedly run to the tree, as they do every year. With other rabbits, they pick a lot of apples and bake apple pies. With beautiful illustrations, the story depicts a precious time in everyday life and the beauty of a season.

Ages 6+  
 194 x 266 mm  
 33 pages  
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**About the Author** ◀

Hiiragi Nonaka, born in 1964, writes more than 20 novels, as well as picture books. Keiko Matsumoto studied illustration in New York City. She draws illustrations mainly for book jackets and posters.



# The Small Town

Shinsaku Fujita



Ages 5+

245 x 187 mm

31 pages

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In a little town a little girl is sunning herself on the stoop in front of her house when her older brother comes to invite her on a walk. They start out hand in hand, going to their left. As they proceed, the edge of the walk to their right abuts on water, which brilliantly mirrors the figures of the two little children as well as the distinctively detailed houses behind them as they pass. They meet a man who is fishing and watch rings spread out on the placid water when he jiggles his bobber. They watch golden leaves falling on the water and creating ripples every which way. They see a duck gliding gently along the surface leaving a faint wake.

As they enjoy the sights along the water's edge, the sky begins to grow dark. Then rain starts to fall, peppering the water with countless small rings. The little girl is getting worried, but the boy hurries her onward, and soon they see their house come into view. When they reach the door, their mother welcomes them home. Before long, the rain turns to snow. The perspective that began to zoom out at the point where the children hastened their steps now shows the entire town blanketed in a soft layer of white: the buildings are arranged in a perfect circle, all facing out onto the water. Inside the house the children's mother brings out a round cake that seems to imitate the shape of the town—with five candles burning on top. Today is the little girl's birthday—another year has passed.

Through his utterly simple story and colorful, meticulously detailed artwork, author Shinsaku Fujita has captured the subtle beauties of an ordinary day across the seasons in a way that is sure to resonate with readers of all ages.



## About the Author

Shinsaku Fujita (1956–) was born in Shizuoka Prefecture and graduated from Musashino Art University with a degree in visual communication design. He has established himself as one of Japan's most popular and talented cover illustrators, with several thousand books to his credit, including numerous titles by such best-selling authors as Stephen King and Miyuki Miyabe as well as multivolume collections like Rampo Edogawa's *Shintei shōnen tantei: Edogawa Rampo* (The New and Revised Boy Detectives: Rampo Edogawa; 26 vols.) and Maurice Leblanc's *Shintei shirīzu kaitō Rupan* (The New and Revised Gentleman Burglar Lupan Series; 20 vols.). Fujita made his debut as a picture-book author in 2009 with *Chiisana machi* (The Small Town).

# My Room in the Fields

Akiko Miyakoshi



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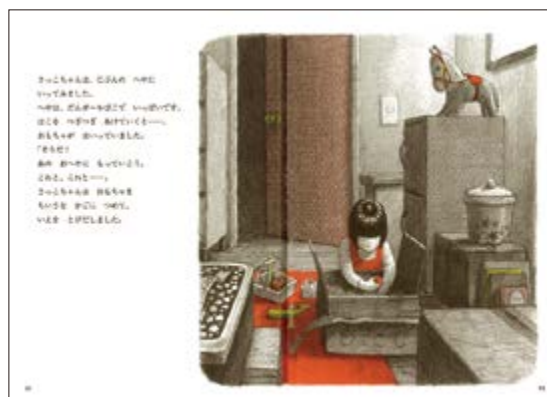
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Sakko and her family have just moved to a new home, and she can hardly wait to meet the little girl who lives next door. Unfortunately, the neighbors are out. As she explores the surroundings of her new home, she finds a place in the shrubbery where the branches of a tree form a roof overhead. “Wow, it’s like a little room in here,” she says. To her delight, at the foot of the tree she also finds a basket filled with a set of toy dishes for playing house.

Sakko decorates the basket with dandelions and clover, then goes inside to get some of her own toys. When she gets back, the toy dishes have all been laid out, and she’s greeted by a girl holding a wreath made of dandelions and clover. It is her neighbor, Yoko.

The book glows with the excitement and joy of two little girls meeting each other for the first time.



## About the Author

Akiko Miyakoshi (1982–) won the Nissan Children’s Storybook and Picture Book Grand Prix for *Typhoon Comes* in 2009, and her *The Tea Party in the Woods* garnered the Japan Picture Book Awards Grand Prize in 2011. Her other works include *Piano Recital* and *Whose Is This?*

# My Jump Rope and the Little Foxes

Text by **Kimiko Aman**

Illus. by **Komako Sakai**



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Rie left her jump rope at a park, so she and her little brother Ken go back to get it. They can't find it, but then they hear someone's laughter in the wind. Rie and Ken see ten little foxes playing with a jump rope, but they keep getting their tails caught in it. Rie and Ken watch quietly, but when the foxes spy them, they end up teaching the foxes how to skip rope the right way, and everyone has a good time.

Rie then notices it's her jump rope, but one of the little foxes says, "It's mine. God gave it to me when I asked for it. And it even has my name, Rie, written on it!" Ken starts to tell the fox that Rie is his sister's name too, but Rie stops him. Without saying anything, she leaves her rope with the foxes. On the way home, Rie recalls the happy look on the face of Rie the fox.

With beautiful illustrations, the book delicately depicts the natural impulse to be kind and thoughtful that every child is born with. Winner of the Japan Picture Book Prize, this touching story will bring a smile to every reader.



## About the Author

Kimiko Aman (1931–) received the Japan Association of Writers for Children New Talent Award in 1968 for *A Car the Color of the Sky*, a collection of eight fantasy stories. She has received numerous other awards, including the Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award for the picture book *Chii-chan and the Shadow Figures*.

Komako Sakai (1966–) has continued to produce hits, many of which have been picked up for overseas editions. Her *Friday Sugar* was awarded a Plaque at the 2005 Biennial of Illustration Bratislava. In 2006, *Mad at Mommy* received the French Pitchou and Dutch Zilveren Griffel Prizes. Her drawings of children and animals are delicate and endearing, yet also carry a note of sadness that seems to draw out readers' sympathies.





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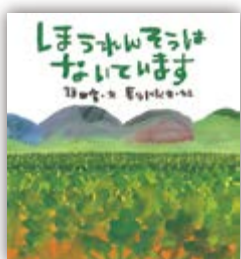
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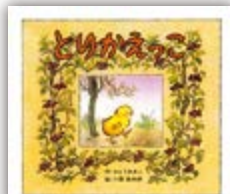
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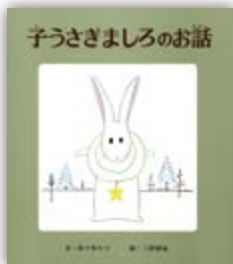
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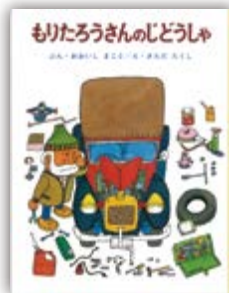
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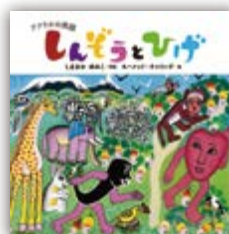
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Yoh Morinaga  
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 ISBN 978-4591128602  
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# Mr. Fabre's Insect Class 2: The Joy of Studying Insects

Text by **Daisaburo Okumoto**

Illus. by **Kohei Yamashita**



Ages 8+

207 x 205 mm

175 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591154793

Rights sold: China, Korea and Taiwan

This is a second volume of translated extracts from French entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre's *Souvenirs entomologiques*, which were originally published as installments in a series appearing in the *Asahi* Newspaper Elementary School Edition between October 2015 and March 2017. As in the first volume, the text is written in Fabre's voice, as if he is speaking to the reader about the habits and ecology of the various insects. Added to details about each insect's characteristics and behavior this time is information about the origins of its name. Each entry offers a page of commentary with colorful, manga-like illustrations on the facing page. In addition to insects in ten major families, such as mantises, scorpions, longhorn and blister beetles, dragonflies, and bagworms, there are chapters on water, singing, and overwintering insects. Interspersed among these chapters are sections titled "Mr. Fabre's Specimen Box" that show close-up color photos of many of the insects. There is also an entry on insects as food for humans, and since one of the book's primary objectives is to infect young readers with the joy of studying insects, there are entries relating how Fabre became interested in entomology, describing experiments he conducted, and explaining how best to observe insects.



Mr. Fabre's Insect Class 1



## About the Author

Daisaburo Okumoto (1944–) was born in Osaka, graduated from the Department of French Literature at the University of Tokyo, and subsequently completed his graduate studies in the same department. A specialist in French literature, he is now a professor emeritus of Saitama University, and is also chairman of the Japan Henri Fabre Association. In 1981 he won the Yomiuri Prize for Literature (Essays & Travelogues) for *Mushi no uchūshi* (A Natural History of the Bug Universe). Among his many other titles are *Mushi kara hajimaru bunmeiron* (Civilization Begins with Bugs), and *Mushi no idokoro* (Things That Bug Me). Okumoto also continues to publish new volumes of *Kan'yaku Fāburu konchūki*, his planned complete translation of Jean-Henri Fabre's *Souvenirs entomologiques*.

Kohei Yamashita (1971–) graduated from the Fine Arts Department at the Osaka University of Arts and works as a graphic designer, character products designer, and picture-book author under the design label "mountain mountain." He is a member of the Japan Henri Fabre Association and the Japan Graphic Designers Association. His picture books include *Kaeru-kun to Kera-kun* (Froggie and Mole Cricket) and the *Banana sensei* (Our Teacher, Mr. Banana) series, both with stories by Yukihisa Tokuda; and the solo title *Sagasō! Maigonosaurusu* (Where's the Dinosaur?).



# Doc Rare-Beast's Clinic Diary: No Effort Spared to Save a Creature's Life!

Kenichi Tamukai



Ages 10+  
195 x 135 mm  
174 pages  
Hardcover  
ISBN 978-4591155196  
Rights sold:

A veterinary doctor who is passionate about his work recounts his successes and failures—and ponders the nature of life and death for all living creatures.

In an era when not just dogs and cats but an increasingly diverse variety of animals are being kept as pets, animal hospitals find themselves being asked to treat frogs and rabbits, lizards and salamanders, and all manner of other creatures. Faced with a suffering animal, author Ken'ichi Tamukai is one of those vets who will do everything he can to help, whether it be conducting stomach surgery on a two-centimeter tree frog, taking a hammer and chisel to a massive bladder stone in a turtle, or attempting some other completely unprecedented treatment. In this work he describes his clinical encounters with more than 100 different kinds of animals, sometimes with humor, sometimes with soberness.

The book is also an autobiographical account of what led Tamukai to become a veterinarian, what he finds fulfilling about his chosen occupation, and what his life in constant close contact with animals has been like. He tells of the many different animals he kept as a child when his curiosity about all kinds of living creatures bloomed—including how he carelessly let some of them get away or die. He tells of his surprise when he discovered that the university he chose in the hope of learning how to treat iguanas had no courses in treating reptiles. He also discusses whether actions taken by humans in the belief that they are good for animals really make the animals happier, as well as various welfare issues associated with experimental animals, invasive species, trap-neuter-return (TNR) activities for feral cats, and the like.

A highly entertaining read, the book is also deeply thought-provoking about the place that creatures unable to understand language have in human life, as well as about the nature of life in general.



## About the Author

Ken'ichi Tamukai (1973–) was born in Aichi Prefecture and graduated from the Department of Veterinary Medicine at Azabu University. He has loved animals from the time he was a little boy, and has always lived with a variety of living creatures in his company. When he opened his veterinary clinic, he decided he wanted to offer care to any creature that was brought in. He has treated over 100 different kinds of animals, from cats and dogs to rabbits, insects, monkeys, and anteaters—earning him the nickname “Doc Rare-Beast.” His publications include *Chinjū no igaku* (Medicine for Rare Animals), *Chinjū byōin: Chippoke dakedo onaji inochi* (Rare-Animal Hospital: However Small, Life Is Life), and *Ikimono to mukiau shigoto* (Working with Living Creatures).



### Dinosaurs Comic Series Tyrannosaurus

Comic by Juzo Tokoro  
Editorial Supervision by Makoto Manabe  
220 x 155 mm/159pages  
Hardcover  
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### World's Heroes & Heroines Comic Series

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Comic by Natsumi Mukai  
Editorial Supervision by Nozomu Kawai  
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Lunlun Yamamoto  
185 x 130 mm /151 pages  
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Text by Shiho Sakamoto  
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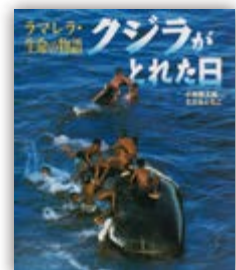
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Text by Makoto Taniguchi  
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210 x 148 mm/207 pages  
Softcover  
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Rights sold: Korea and Taiwan



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Text by Emiko Ito  
Photographer by Yasuhiro Ito  
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Text by Tomoko Egami  
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Ciabou Hany  
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Makoto Yokotsuka  
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### A Horse Poops !

Text by Etsuko Yuki  
Photographer by Yukihiro Fukuda  
230 x 195 mm/32 pages  
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ISBN 978-882644545  
Rights sold:



# I'll See You at the Temple

Text by **Yukiko Takada**

Illus. by **Iko Kimura**



Ages 9+

205 x 153 mm

167 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591151273

Rights sold:

Even as Japan has become an increasingly secular society, 90 percent of funerals continue to be conducted as Buddhist ceremonies. In this story set at a Buddhist temple deep in the mountainous heart of Sado Island, a young boy who is expected to take over the sanctuary as successor to his father and grandfather comes to understand how important it is for the living to share memories of the dead.

Yūsuke, now in the fourth grade, was born as heir to the family that administers the small temple Manpuku-ji. His father (who also teaches middle school and is very strict with Yūsuke) and his grandfather (who dotes on Yūsuke and always takes his side) are both active as priests serving the local community. Not just his own family but all the other adults around assume Yūsuke will follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather before him. But Yūsuke's own dream is to move to Tokyo and become a manga artist. When he's asked to help in the temple's cemetery—cleaning gravesites, removing wilted flowers, and the like—it's only an onerous chore to him.

Then a girl named Miyuki is assigned to the desk next to his at school. She has almost completely stopped speaking since her father died in a traffic accident a year ago. First to capture Yūsuke's attention are Miyuki's talented drawings, but before long he decides that what he really wants to see is her smile. As time goes by he manages to learn that, with everyone tiptoeing around her out of concern for her feelings, she has never been able to talk about her memories of her father, and it has made her feel like she's going to forget him; he also learns that her family has not been able to put up a marker for him. This makes Yūsuke reflect on the invaluable role of the temple as a place where all those with a connection to the deceased can gather to share memories and deepen their mutual ties. Having come to this new understanding, he decides that he, too, will join in the chanting of sutras at the first anniversary memorial service for Miyuki's father. Also at Yūsuke's suggestion, artworks painted by Miyuki's father are put on display in the main hall for the ceremony. The paintings prompt many of the attendees to relate memories of her father to Miyuki. Although it will still take time for her to get over her sadness, her heart is replenished and she regains a positive outlook toward the future. It warms Yūsuke's heart to see the change that has come over her.

Readers see Yūsuke taking important steps toward adulthood as he learns the power of empathy. Also of interest is the illuminating portrayal of everyday life at a Japanese Buddhist temple.

## About the Author

Yukiko Takada was born and raised on the island of Sado in Niigata Prefecture, the daughter of a Buddhist priest administering the mountain temple Manshō-ji. She made her writerly debut in 2017 with *Manpuku-ji de mattemasu* (I'll See You at the Temple), a children's novel about a young boy growing up as heir to a remote temple on the island of Sado.

# She Was Difficult for Me

Yoko Asahina



Ages 10+

190 x 135 mm

236 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591155189

Rights sold:

Mihiro is in sixth grade and still doesn't know how to swim. She has a tendency to run away from things she dislikes or finds difficult instead of facing them head on. The new girl in class, Risa, is smug and aloof and shows no interest in making friends. She claims to have a heart condition and always gets excused from going in the pool. But after school one day, Mihiro finds her swimming with no apparent difficulty in the otherwise deserted pool and discovers her secret: when Risa gets out of the water, Mihiro sees terrible burn scars covering her right leg below the knee. Risa makes Mihiro promise not to tell anyone. The incident leaves Mihiro curious about Risa and wanting to get to know her better, but Risa remains chilly toward her. When their teacher tells them their summer-break assignment is to overcome a personal aversion, shortcoming, or difficulty, Mihiro decides to tackle the trouble she's been having befriending Risa.

There is a reason Risa changed schools: she started getting bullied after being left with burn scars on her leg. Her parents had a falling out over how to deal with the problem, and they no longer live together. Risa thinks her father considers her a loser for wanting to run away from the bullying. Hurt that even her best friends had distanced herself, she had vowed that she would not make any friends at her new school.

During summer break, Risa goes to the park regularly. An elderly man engages her in conversation there, and they get to know each other. One day she visits him at his house. To her surprise, Mihiro is there. She is the granddaughter the elderly man had said he wanted Risa to meet. With this encounter as the catalyst, the two girls gradually get to be friends, as Mihiro works undauntedly to break through Risa's defenses, and Risa is able to open herself up to someone else again for the first time since transferring schools. It is a tale of friendship and growth, offered up especially for tweenage children who struggle with feelings of inferiority or have difficulty making friends.

## About the Author

Yoko Asahina was born in Fukuoka Prefecture and graduated from Chikushi Jogakuen College. After working at a desk job and as an instructor for the Fukuoka Swimming Association, she began attending a reading group run by children's author Yoshihiko Iida and took up writing stories of her own. She received the Misesu Children's Story Grand Prize Excellence Award in 1988, and the Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Excellence Award in 1996. Her works include *"Ribenji suru" to aitsu wa itta* (He Said He'd Get His Revenge), *Hesomagari papa ni hanataba o* (Flowers for a Difficult Dad), and *Tatami no heya no shashinten* (Photo Show in a Tatami Room). She makes her home in Fukuoka Prefecture.

# I Can't Talk So Smoothly

Naoya Shiino



Ages 12+

194 x 126 mm

330 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591153239

Rights sold: Taiwan

All through elementary school, Yūta Kashiwazaki has been the object of ridicule and unable to make friends because of his stuttering. On his first day of middle school, the teacher asks the students to introduce themselves to the class, and the pressure gets to be too much for him: he flees the room before his turn comes. But he is also determined to overcome the problem, so when he sees a membership recruitment flier for the school's Broadcast Club that says "Anyone can become a good speaker," he decides to visit the group's activity room. He learns that the club is headed by a boy in ninth grade named Tachibana, the only continuing member, and there is one other seventh grader, a girl named Kaya Kobe, who has expressed an interest in joining. Yūta worries about the burden likely to fall on Kaya because his stutter will prevent him from taking the microphone, but he is ultimately persuaded by Tachibana to join.

In the classroom, Kaya makes no effort to interact with other students, but she is nice to Yūta, and he rejoices that he has finally found a friend. She even speaks up for him when others find out about his stuttering. She asks Yūta to help her with the training she's doing to become a voice actress by reading an anime script with her, but he stumbles so much over the words that he grows increasingly frustrated. Then one day the group's faculty advisor suggests club members should enter the upcoming city-wide speech contest, and Kaya urges Yūta to take part as well. But it also comes out that the script-reading practice was actually set up as an exercise to help Yūta conquer his stuttering. Since he has already tried various reading exercises, including reading playscripts, to no avail, this demonstration that others think they know better makes him despair of anyone ever being able to understand his pain. He turns his back on Kaya and flees. He also lashes out at his older sister when she reminds him that he needs to keep doing whatever he can to overcome his stutter.

Yūta stops going to school and shuts himself in at home, but Tachibana comes to visit and reveals that his sister is being ostracized in the Drama Club because she refused to play a character who stutters. Tachibana also brings with him Kaya's copy of the anime script, thinking it is Yūta's. When Yūta

discovers that Kaya has written detailed pronunciation notes in her script aimed at helping him out, he realizes that he's been unfair in dismissing other people's efforts to help him as "thinking they know better," and sees that he has been running away not only from them but from himself. He changes his mind and decides to enter the contest after all. In his speech, he addresses the problem of stuttering head on and expresses his gratitude to his friends and family for their concern. He tells the audience that he likes words for their power to comfort, and that even if the words don't come out so smoothly he still enjoys speaking. Needless to say, he does not get through his delivery without stuttering. But he has been able to get up in front of a large crowd and express his true feelings without running away.

It is a work that seeks to foster a better understanding of dysphemia.

## About the Author

Naoya Shiino (1984–) was born in Hokkaido. After graduating from a university in Sapporo and joining the working world, he continued to write on the side, and a manuscript he submitted in 2014 became a finalist for the Poplar Fiction Prize for New Writers. He made his writerly debut in 2017 when a revised version of that manuscript was published as *Boku wa jōzu ni shaberenai* (I Can't Talk So Smoothly).



# The Bum Detective: Lady Purple and the Secret Code

## Troll



Ages 6+

216 x 155 mm

88 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591146187

Rights sold: Czech, China,

Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam

The Bum Detective series so popular among the picture-book set now has a companion in this illustrated chapter-book series targeted at elementary-age children. This is the first volume in the series and contains two all-new stories.

In the title work, the Bum Detective is in his office reading the newspaper during tea time, and an article about a serial burglar wanted by the police has just caught his eye when a woman dressed from head to toe in purple comes in the door. She needs him to decode a message she recently discovered at the back of her safe, she says. It was apparently placed there by her ancestors on the farm that has long been in the family, and she is convinced it will lead her to treasure if she can break the code. The detective thinks she must be the woman people call “Lady Purple” mentioned in another article in that day’s paper—the owner of a sweet potato farm who loves to dress in purple. Although he senses something suspicious about her, he works with her to solve a number of different puzzles, and in the end succeeds in learning the location of the treasure as well as his client’s true identity: though disguised as Lady Purple, this is actually the male burglar the detective had read about in the paper.

In the second story, *Oyatsu dorobō wa dare da?* (Who Stole the Custard?), the Bum Detective hears the sound of breaking glass coming from inside as he arrives back at his office from a shopping trip. When he enters, his assistant, Brown, tells him a burglar has just fled out the broken window with the egg custard that was supposed to be their snack. The detective then notices that his favorite teacup is also missing. The burglar must have taken that as well, suggests Brown, but in the face of the detective’s systematic investigation of the evidence and sharp-witted questioning, ultimately admits the truth: he had inadvertently broken the teacup and the window himself, and had quickly hidden the pudding in order to make it look like there had been a burglary.

Integrated into the stories at various points are a variety of games for readers to enjoy as they make their way through the book—mazes, hidden pictures, “What’s wrong with this picture?” and others.



Vol.2



Vol.3



Vol.4



Vol.5

### About the Author

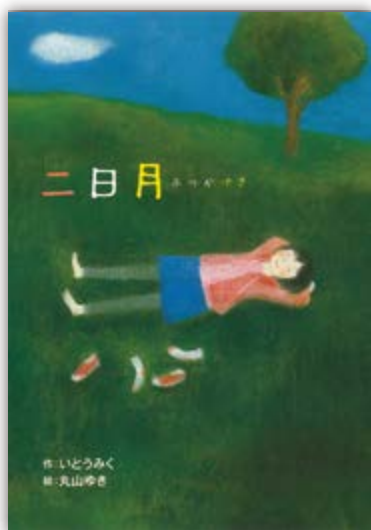
Troll is a team consisting of writer Yoko Tanaka (1976–) and illustrator Masahide Fukasawa (1981–). Together they produce picture books, illustrations, and application graphics for the iPhone, iPad, and Android. Their first picture book, *Oshiri tantei* (The Bum Detective), has expanded into a multi-volume series. Troll also produces a companion series of readers targeted at the lower grades of elementary school, called *Oshiri tantei fairu* (The Bum Detective Files), which includes *Oshiri tantei: Murasaki fujin no angō jiken* (The Bum Detective: Lady Purple and the Secret Code).



# Second Day Moon

Text by **Miku Ito**

Illus. by **Yuki Maruyama**



Ages 8+

194 x 134 mm

207 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4882645375

Rights sold: Korea and Taiwan

The main character is An, a girl in fourth grade. Her long-awaited little sister has just been born, and Mommy and Daddy named her Mei. In the first family picture of the four of them together, everybody is beaming. But a month after Mei was born, Mommy and Daddy don't seem their usual selves, and her new little sister keeps spitting everything back up after nursing. It seems so serious, she's afraid to ask, but she finally screws up her courage. Her parents tell her that because of something that happened when Mei was being born, the doctor has said she might not live very long, and even if she does, she will probably be disabled.

Unable to keep her mother's milk down, Mei remains thin and small. She is very sickly, and must be rushed to the hospital by ambulance over and over. But each time she achieves something new, the whole family rejoices. Mei keeps trying with everything she has. Unfortunately, even as the family follows Mei's progress with love, they feel hurt by the doctor continuing to assume in everything he says that Mei will not live long, and by people who respond with pity or annoyance at the sight of a handicapped child. And for An, the worst part is feeling bad for being jealous of Mei, even though she loves her, for all the time and attention she gets from Mommy and Daddy.

The story helps young readers understand and gain empathy for people with disabilities by taking them along on An's journey of learning about her little sister's special challenges. As she learns what the family needs to do to support Mei so she can have the fullest life possible in spite of her handicap, she must also come to terms with her own changing feelings as well as the disturbing attitudes of people around her.

At the end, An and two friends see a sliver of a moon in the sky as they leave school late in the afternoon. When one of her friends comments on the cycles of the moon—how it goes into hiding but always comes back—An inwardly compares it to her own dark periods since her sister was born, and takes reassurance from the moon that even if the dark periods continue, they'll always be followed by returning light.

## About the Author

Miku Ito was born in Kanagawa Prefecture. She is a children's author. In 2013 she won the JAWC New Talent Award for *Itoko no taijūkei* (Itoko's Scales), and in 2015 she took the Japan Juvenile Writers Association Prize for *Sora e* (To the Sky). Her other titles include *Kāchan toriatsukai setsumeisho* (The Mama-Owner's Manual), *Onēchan tte hōnto tsurai!* (It's So Hard Being a Sister!), and *Shafu* (Rickshaw Man).

# The Miraculous Eggs of Kiwa-san

Text by **Makiko Usami**

Illus. by **Hiroko Fujiwara**



Ages 8+

205 x 155 mm

167 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591155172

Rights sold: Taiwan

Fourth-grader Satoshi is having a hard time staving off boredom during summer vacation. His parents are always tied up with the bento shop they run in the shopping district by the station, and his best friend Sōta goes to soccer practice every day, so Satoshi must spend his days alone at home, without anyone to play with.

One day his father takes him to a farm, where he learns that an elderly woman nearby named Kiwa keeps chickens and produces eggs known locally as “dream eggs” for their incomparable flavor. Satoshi decides he wants to make an omelet with these special eggs for his parents, and arranges to be paid in kind for helping Kiwa with her farm chores. From weeding to harvesting vegetables to cleaning the chicken coop, he has to learn tasks that are completely new to him, but he applies himself to his assigned jobs day after day. Before long, helping the elderly Kiwa has become his greatest source of satisfaction because of the sense of purpose it gives him. Then, when Satoshi receives his payment in eggs, he makes omelets all by himself for the first time and puts them in bentos for his parents—as his way of showing them his love.

It is a heartwarming tale that shows a young boy learning and growing through his contacts with Kiwa and her chickens as well as with others around him.



## About the Author

Makiko Usami (1979–) was born in Nagano Prefecture. She taught elementary school before she became an author, making her writerly debut in 2009 with the story *Aikotoba wa kabutomushi* (The Secret Password Is Rhinoceros Beetle). Her other titles include *Hoshi-otoshi* (Starfall) and *Tokimeki danchi no natsumatsuri* (Summerfest at the Tokimeki Apartments). She offers fresh and supple portraits of children finding their way in today's world.

# Ghost Art Museum Series

Text by **Sachiko Kashiwaba**  
 Illus. by **Takako Hirai**



Ages 8+

203 x 155 mm

143 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591093320

Rights sold: Taiwan

## Welcome to The Ghost Art Museum !

In *Welcome to the Ghost Art Museum!*, the inaugural volume of what has now become a popular series, a fifth-grade girl named Mahiru became the director of the eponymous museum in accordance with the original founder's last wishes. The many ghosts that come out of the paintings on display at the museum are visible only to children. In each installment, of which this is the fifth, the wishes of various objects cause them to transmogrify into ghosts that Mahiru can see because she is still a child.

Mahiru, a fifth grader, is asked to work at an art museum as a director! The museum is owned by her father's company, and the mother of the president established the museum. According to her will, the director should be a girl younger than 10 years old. That's why Mahiru is selected, and she is excited to work there.

But, the museum is very mysterious. In fact, figures in paintings, such as an old lady, a knight and angels, come to life—though only children can see them. Young readers will enjoy warm and humorous stories in this series.



**Fairies' Cake is Mysterious?**



**A Mysterious Train doesn't Stop!**



**Doll's house is full of monsters**



**Much Ado about the Ghost Amusement Park**

### About the Author

Sachiko Kashiwaba (1953–) is a native of Iwate Prefecture, where she was born in the coastal city of Miyako. She studied at Tohoku Pharmaceutical University in Sendai, and while still in college made her debut as a children's writer by winning the 1974 Kodansha Award for New Writers of Children's Literature with *The Marvelous Village Veiled in Mist* (tr. 1987), which inspired the Studio Ghibli animated film *Spirited Away*. She quickly established herself as a leading children's author, with work ranging from novel-length fantasies to nursery tales. Her stories portray fantasy worlds that are direct extensions of the real world. By venturing into those other realities, her characters discover things about themselves that allow them to return to their place in this world with a new outlook. Her many other awards include the JAWC New Talent Award for *The Marvelous Village Veiled in Mist*; the 2007 Sankei Children's Book Award Grand Prize for *Botan-san no fushigi na mainichi* (The Marvelous Days of Mrs. Peony); and the 2010 Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award for *Tsuzuki no toshokan* (The Rest of the Story Library). Her other works include *Buremen basu* (Bremen Bus), *Dōdō-tori no komazukai* (The Dodo Bird's Gofer), and NHK-TV's educational puppet drama *Bakeruno shōgakkō hyūdoro-gumi* (Hyudoro Class, Monster School).

Takako Hirai (1954–) graduated from Musashino Art University and works as both an illustrator and a picture-book author. She made her publishing debut in 1980 with the picture book *Aru asa Jiji Jan Bō wa ottamageta!?* (Flabbergasted One Morning). Her other picture book titles include *Mahō tsukai no Nana bāsan* (Nana the Sorceress), and *Obake sukūru ichinensei* (In First Grade at Ghost School). She provided the illustrations for the *Obake bijutsukan* (Ghost Art Museum) series, and being a big fan of mysteries, she has designed the covers for numerous mystery paperbacks. Besides books, she applies her creative talents to commercial illustration, licensed-character merchandising, calendars, CD jackets, and so forth.



# Hozuki Clinic of Internal and Monster Medicine Series

Text by **Yoko Tomiyasu**

Illus. by **Yoshika Komatsu**



Ages 8+

208 x 154 mm

143 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591090299

Rights sold: China, Taiwan  
and Vietnam

## Even Monsters Get the Flu!

One Saturday Kyohei, a fifth-grader, wanders into an unfamiliar back alley and up the front steps of Hozuki Clinic—which he’s amazed to learn is the only specialist in monster medicine in the entire world. Rushing out on an emergency house call, its head physician, Dr. Kyojuro Hozuki, presses Kyohei into looking after things at the office, and the boy must deal with a constant stream of frightful monster patients, from Hundred-Eyes to Two-Mouths to No-Face. Not only that, but Kyohei is soon called away to Mt. Suzaku to help with the doctor’s errand. As it turns out, there’s an ogre hiding in a cave who needs to get a shot to prevent the horrid Ogre Flu from spreading to the other monsters and causing total mayhem. Dr. Hozuki lures the wild child-eating ogre out with Kyohei’s tasty scent, and then—just when Kyohei’s about to be snatched up—sticks the needle right into the monster’s arm. Success!

As a reward for his work, the doctor hands Kyohei a mysterious bell shaped like a hozuki, or Chinese lantern plant, which serves as the key to the way between the boy’s own world and that of the Hozuki Clinic. Ring it, and it’ll bring him here again. Despite his scare, Kyohei decides that he does want to come back to see Dr. Hozuki so he can continue being the only assistant to the only monster doctor in the world.

Yoko Tomiyasu, who has captivated countless fans with her masterful works of fantasy, does so again in the opening volume to her popular series about the mysterious Dr. Hozuki, his inquisitive young assistant Kyohei, and the monster-related troubles they set out to solve. Boys and girls alike enjoy this series filled with bright humor and skillful storytelling.



### About the Author

Yoko Tomiyasu (1959–) won the Shogakkan Children’s Literature Award for *The Rustling Oak Lodge*; the Niimi Nankichi Children’s Literature Award in 1997 for her *Little Princess Suzuna* series; the Sankei Children’s Book Award in 2001 for *The Sky Myth*; the Noma Prize for Children’s Literature for *Bon Invitation*.

# Kaboom from Above

Text by **Naoko Uozumi**

Illus. by **KESIN**



Ages 10+

189 x 135 mm

187 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591150061

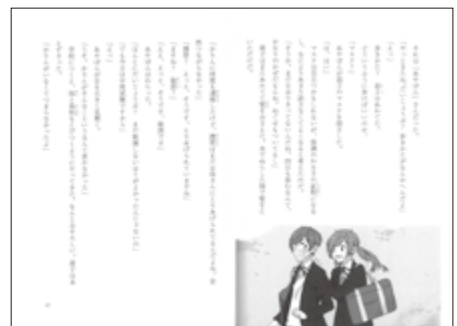
Rights sold:

Karin Takakura is a vivacious eighth-grader who has a habit of blurting out whatever comes into her head without much thought. Recently three of her friends have told her she's being insensitive and should learn to stop and think before she speaks.

On her way home from school one day Karin runs into classmate Riko Imai, a socially awkward girl who gets good grades but mostly keeps to herself, has no friends, and is dreading the school trip that's scheduled next month. The two girls live in the same apartment building, but they have little else in common and Riko spends her time surfing the Web, so they've never really connected. As they are riding the elevator together, a massive lightning strike results in the two girls switching bodies. Completely different in appearance, personality, and family circumstances, the two must now begin figuring out how to adapt—all to a tremendously entertaining effect.

Suddenly being forced to experience life in someone else's shoes rapidly expands the girls' horizons. They learn and grow by interacting with a new family, experiencing first love, and discovering what others think of them, and they begin to understand and accept themselves in ways they had not been able to before. For example, when Karin in Riko's body gets teased for being chubby, she feels hurt, but it also makes her reflect on things she'd said before without thinking. She realizes that how the other person feels about what you say is more important than your own impulse for saying it. From then on, she learns to think about the other person before she speaks.

The experience shows the two teenagers how they can remain true to their unique selves while also relating to others in ways that respect their separate uniqueness.



## About the Author

Naoko Uozumi (1966–) won the Kodansha Award for New Writers of Children's Literature for her 1995 debut novel *Hi-baransu* (Non-Balance), achieving overnight fame when a film version came out in 2001. Subsequent works of young-adult literature such as *Chō-hāmonī* (Ultra-Harmony), *Zō no dansu* (Elephant's Dance), and *Risetto* (Reset) have become best-selling paperbacks. *Tū toreinzū* (Two Trains) won the Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award, and *Engei shōnen* (Gardening Boys) the JAWC Award. *Engei shōnen* has been turned into a manga, earning it an even broader audience. Among her many other titles are *Kuma no atarimae* (A Bear's Lot) and *Pinku no kamisama* (Pink Gods). Uozumi's unsentimental but sympathetic portrayals of teenagers dealing with emotional trials and insecurity as they try to find their way in the world have earned her a large and devoted following of young readers.

# The Artist and the Angel: Twenty Brief Stories for Little Adults

Kinji Ishikura



Ages 10+  
197 x 154 mm  
159 pages  
Hardcover  
ISBN 978-4591151297  
Rights sold:

A collection of lyrical short stories by picture-book author Kinji Ishikura.

In the title story, a starving artist has been trying to sell his paintings on a street corner in Paris. It is winter and night is falling. As the elderly painter begins to pack up his canvases, disappointed that once again he has failed to sell any, he hears from behind him the voice of a young girl. “Your paintings feel so warm!” she says. After gazing raptly at them for a time, she says, “Thank you. They make me feel happy inside.” Taking a single red rose from her basket, she slips the stem into the artist’s chest pocket. With the rose on his chest, he returns to his attic room.

The next morning—Christmas morning—the artist lies dead with a blissful expression on his face. On his easel next to the sofa where he lies is a freshly painted canvas of a beautiful angel clutching a bouquet of red roses.

Among the other stories, “Johanna” tells of a style-conscious girl whose pet dog suddenly begins speaking and shows that he has a mind of his own. “Sparrow” portrays an aged war widow who sees a bird outside her window and wonders if it is her dead husband. Whether whimsical or sad, each of the 20 gems in the collection summons up deep feelings with an artist’s eye for detail.

The volume is beautifully produced in black and gold to evoke the dreamlike atmosphere of the book. The title leaf of each tale includes a charcoal drawing of a scene from the story, and on the back of the same page is an abstract work inspired by it.



## About the Author

Kinji Ishikura (1935-) was born in Ehime Prefecture and graduated from the Department of Crafts at Tokyo University of the Arts. He worked as an industrial designer before launching a career as a picture-book author. He won the Sankei Children’s Book Art Award in 1980 for *Tanabata mukashi* (Tanabata Long Ago). In 1995 he received both a Japan Picture Book Award and the Kenbuchi Picture Book Grand Prize for *Obāchan ga iru to ii noni na* (I Wish Grandma Were Here; story by Motoko Matsuda). Among the many other picture books he has created or collaborated on are *Umi o watatta orizuru* (The Folded Cranes That Crossed the Sea); *Hi no ame, kōri no ame: Kamui yukara, Ainu no kamisama ga hanashita koto* (Rain of Fire, Rain of Ice: An Ainu Epic); and *Sora yuku fune* (Boats in the Sky).



# The Triple-Zero Arithmetic Case Files

Text by **Shogo Mukai**

Illus. by **Keisuke Ikeda**



Ages 10+

172 x 112 mm

223 pages

Softcover

ISBN 978-4591145104

Rights sold: Korea



Fifth-grader Yūten Ariake is a math whiz, but no one in his class knows it because he blows off the tests and gets low scores. His best friend Kyōhei Todoroki excels in sports, is a big fan of superhero shows on TV, and has an unusually strong sense of justice.

Yūten and Kyōhei learn one day that their classmate Shige is being badgered by class bully Tsuyoshi. Coming to Shige's aid, they suggest that the two race each other. But Tsuyoshi is among the most fleet-footed runners in the class, while Shige invariably comes in last. To overcome this problem, Yūten puts on a disguise and, claiming the role of referee, tells Tsuyoshi that he has to give Shige a 10-meter head start as a handicap. The strategy is to take advantage of Zeno's famous paradox of Achilles and the tortoise with the head start, which says Achilles can never catch up to the tortoise because by the time he reaches where the tortoise was when he started, the tortoise has moved to a point farther ahead, and in the time it takes Achilles to reach that next point, the tortoise had moved ahead yet again, and so on. With his head spinning from the description of the paradox, Tsuyoshi fails to notice that he is actually racing Kyōhei, or that Kyōhei then switches places with Shige just before the goal line so it looks as though he beat Tsuyoshi. After it's all over, Shige explains the trick to Tsuyoshi, and the two become friends.

Prompted by these events, Yūten and Kyōhei band together as the "Triple-Zeros," a top-secret action duo whose mission is to make the school a "zero bully, zero mischief, zero tears" zone by coming to the rescue of those who find themselves in difficulties of one kind or another. They are soon joined as well by their beautiful classmate Rei Shinomiya, who is adept at magic.

Author Shōgo Mukai earned an A rank in the Japanese Math Olympics while in high school, and this is his first volume in a series of stories that introduce math concepts to grade school students in an entertaining way. Mini math lessons are embedded throughout the narrative. Whether he is showing readers how to calculate the speed of the ball in dodgeball, describing "the paradox of the heap," or introducing basic math theorems, Mukai has a knack for making the subject both accessible and fun.



## About the Author

Shogo Mukai (1989–) was born in Kanagawa Prefecture and graduated from the University of Tokyo. While in high school, he participated in the Japanese Math Olympics. He is particularly fascinated by number sequences. As a member of the kendo club while at the University of Tokyo, he advanced to the nationwide tournament of the University Kendo Federation. His publishing debut came with *Omakase! Sūgakuya-san* (Mathman to the Rescue!) in 2013 after his manuscript for the novel won the 2012 Poplar Fiction Prize for New Writers. Appealing to a broad cross section of readers ranging from middle- and high-school age to adults, the book has enjoyed remarkably strong sales for a first novel, going through six printings in its first year of publication. Mukai's second novel was *Kamae! Bokutachi kenshikai* (Kendo Team, Ready!) centering on a small, outmatched high-school kendo team. In 2015 he published *Toripuru zero no sansū jiken-bo* (The Triple-Zero Arithmetic Case Files), his first work targeted at younger children; it became a hit and has been turned into a series.

# Airplane Trails to Tomorrow

Sumiko Yatsuka



Ages 12+

194 x 126 mm

286 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591154298

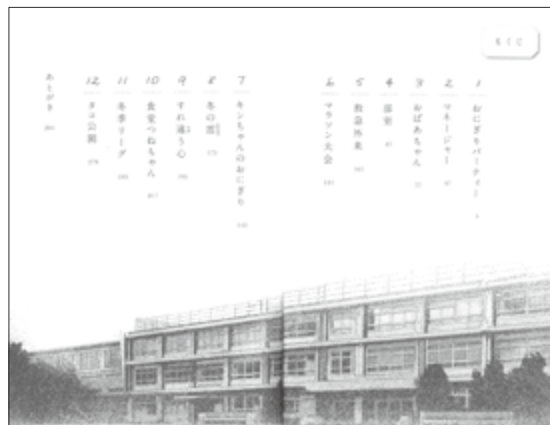
Rights sold:

While her father is away in the next prefecture on long-term assignment for his company, eighth-grader Yū Mizoguchi must be the grown-up in the house, taking care of her mother, who suffers from severe depression and doesn't feel up to housework, and looking after her little brother Dai, who is in the first grade. Besides keeping up with the demands of school, she must singlehandedly manage all the household chores. It is a struggle to make ends meet on her father's meager income, and Yū dreams of somehow escaping from the humdrum life of drudgery that seems to stretch endlessly before her. She likes looking up at airplane trails in the sky because they remind her there are other places in the world and let her feel like she can go anywhere she wants.

One day the sight of a boy walking across the schoolyard captures her attention. His confident manner and penetrating gaze make her heart leap, and though she has never had any interest in boys before this, she soon finds herself head over heels in love. The boy is Tetsu Kinjō, and he's a member of the soccer team. She and her friends Asami and Mari get the team's faculty advisor to let them watch practices, and they volunteer to help out as team managers. Yū finds that it soothes her heart to watch Kin-chan, as he's familiarly known, giving his all in the practice sessions.

Then one day she finds her father at home when she gets back from school. He tells her that he's been unable to meet his performance goals at work and might be let go. Yū explodes in anger at her ineffectual father and helpless, shut-in mother. The next day, wanting to clear her head, she goes to watch Kin-chan working out by himself early in the morning. Watching him train in the morning quickly becomes part of her daily routine, and she and Kin-chan gradually begin to grow closer . . .

In this story of adolescent troubles, friendship, and love, a young teen girl's first tentative steps toward romance while contending with unwanted burdens at home are portrayed with evocative sensitivity.



## About the Author

Sumiko Yatsuka (1950–) is a native of Innoshima in Hiroshima Prefecture. Her first work, set in a shipbuilding town and published in 1986, was *Umi: Hitotsu no asa* (The Sea One Morning). *Oretachi no dorīmu faktorī* (Our Dream Factory) and *Ritān matchi: Shinji no baai* (Return Match: The Case of Shinji)—a sequel to the prize-winning *Seishun kōro: Fenikkusumarū* (Youth's Voyage: The Phoenix-Marū)—are tales of teenagers who, having failed academically, find their way through physical work, a recurring theme for the author. In *Watashi no suki na hito* (Someone I Like), which won the Noma Prize for Children's Literature in 2006, even the light romance of a young girl is depicted against the stark economic straits of her family. *Ashita ni tsuzuku rizumu* (The Rhythm Will Go On Until Tomorrow), based on a song by Innoshima's pop-rock duo Porno Graffiti, is, like many of her works, intended for a YA audience, but she writes for younger children as well.





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Text by Yoshihiko Funazaki  
Illus. by Ikuo Nishimura  
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 Rights sold: Korea



# Cute and Easy Pom-Pom Crafts

Mariko Ishikawa



Ages 5+

170 x 190 mm

60 pages

Softcover

ISBN 978-4591156179

Rights sold:

Some yarn and a stiff piece of cardboard to wind it around are all you need. Simply wind the yarn around and around the cardboard base, tie the center, snip the loops with sharp scissors, and—voilà!—you have a pom-pom. They're as much fun to make as they are to play with, and this book describes the process in terms simple enough for a five-year-old to follow. Every craft idea is illustrated in full color with clear how-to instructions.

The look of the finished pom-poms can be varied by changing how you wind the yarn, by combining different kinds of yarn, and by mixing colors. Among the many suggested projects are a pom-pom flower bouquet, rings, hair ties, hair bands, and cute little animal mascots. You can also combine multiple pom-poms to make cushions, a pom-pom tree, and more.

The volume includes a handy ruler for measuring yarn lengths, as well as templates for preparing small and large cardboard pom-pom makers.



## About the Author

Mariko Ishikawa was born in Chiba. She graduated from the toy design department of a technical school and began her career at a toy maker, working in planning and design. After subsequent stints making children's videos for a production company and serving on the creative staff for NHK's Tsukutte asobo (Fun with Crafts) television program for preschool and kindergarten age children, she decided to go independent. Her current activities include overseeing creative production for the NHK children's craft show Nōjī no hirameki kōbō (Nosy's Inspiring Atelier). She publishes craft, 3D-illustration, and doll-making projects in books, magazines, and video media, and also holds workshops for parents, children, and teachers.

# Tangram Brainflash: Colors and Shapes



Ages 3+

210 x 150 mm

32 pages

Box

ISBN 978-4591158043

Rights sold:

The tangram, a puzzle that originated in China, is tremendously popular as an educational toy. The objective is to figure out how seven variously shaped pieces cut from a square can be rearranged to match the outlines of countless other shapes offered as puzzles. The process helps children develop their sense of space and shape as well as their thinking skills.

This book of tangram puzzles comes with a set of seven differently colored tans made of wood as well as a separate tangram-puzzle poster. The child studies the pictures in the book or on the poster and places tans on them in the appropriate combinations to match the outlined shapes. The challenges are ordered in five levels of difficulty, from simple shapes that require combining just two tans, to complex shapes that require all seven, making it possible for children of all ages from three on up—and their parents, too—to enjoy the challenge.

The set comes in a convenient box for easy cleanup when the playing is done.



# Tipsy Balancing Blocks



Ages 2+

210 x 150 mm

32 pages

Box

ISBN 978-4591153932

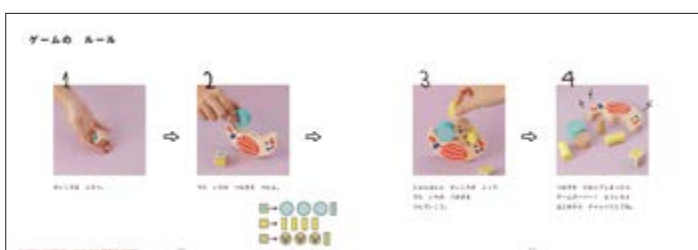
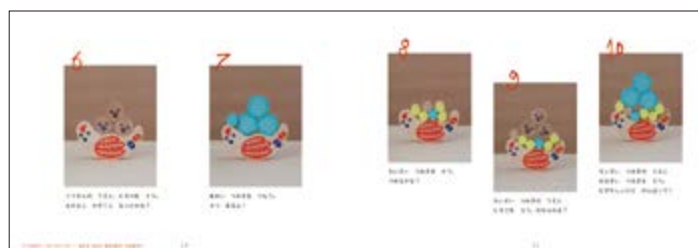
Rights sold:

An illustrated book of instructions offers suggestions for endless fun with the accompanying set of wooden blocks designed on the theme of a mother bird and her chicks. With ideas that call for stacking, arranging, balancing, and playing games with the 13 blocks and special die, the book offers intellectual and motor-skill training suitable for a broad range of developmental stages.

Suggested are three basic ways of playing with the blocks.

1. Stacking: The mother bird is in a stylized crescent shape that teeters back and forth as the smaller round/cylindrical blocks in three sizes are stacked in its cradle. To fit different developmental levels, the book also illustrates a variety of simpler stacking challenges that omit the tipsy crescent-shaped block.
2. Arranging: For smaller children not yet ready for stacking, the book suggests a variety of more basic challenges, such as matching blocks by size and color, rolling the blocks, and arranging them to look like a flower, a face, a butterfly, and so forth by following the illustrations provided.
3. Games: Roll the special die and add the block it calls for atop the mother bird. Send the stack toppling and it's "Game Over!"

Children can play all by themselves or with friends and family for hours of fun. The set comes with a convenient box for storing the blocks when not in use.





# Twelve Munchkins in the Forest

Hiroaki Hara & Birthday



Ages 6+

217 x 153 mm

35 pages

Hardcover

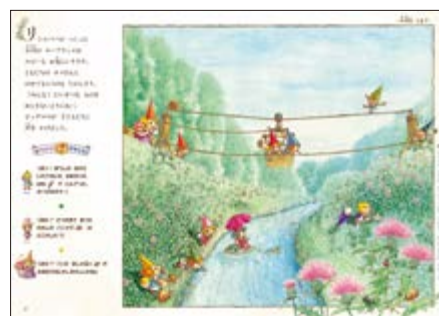
ISBN 978-4591144633

Rights sold: China

Ruby is a little munchkin who lives in the forest with Big Mama, who loves to cook, Little Papa, who's good with his hands, and her nine little munchkin brothers and sisters. The munchkins are all happy-go-lucky scatterbrains who can't seem to stop misplacing things. Today is the day of the picnic that Ruby has so eagerly been waiting for. On their way to Dandelion Hill, the munchkin family come upon a baby mouse being attacked by a snake and rescue her. They deliver the baby mouse safely to her home and become friends with her family. The mice show them to a secret place by the lake. There they see mysterious round balls bubbling up to the surface, and watch them turn into fairies.

Below the story text on each page is a sidebar titled "Look for it! Find it!" with a variety of different tasks for the reader. For example, the reader is asked to find things that Ruby and her family have dropped or misplaced along the way (their picnic basket, some jam, a box of snacks, a baby bottle, etc.), to look for snails and ants hidden in the pictures, to find the names of the flowers, and to solve mazes.

At the end of the volume are six pages of answer diagrams laid out in an easy-to-understand format. Besides enjoying a cute and fanciful story, young readers can have lots of fun looking for the hidden pictures and solving the mazes.



## About the Author

Hiroaki Hara & Birthday teams the creative group Birthday Co., Ltd. with its president Hiroaki Hara, who is a picture-book author in his own right. As a maker of video and trading-card games, Birthday is known for its creation of a variety of characters and worlds. It developed the role-playing video game *Daikaijū monogatari* (The Great Shell Monsters) and produced the video game *Cocoro no cocoron*, among many others. In collaboration with Hiroaki Hara, the group has produced the role-playing picture books in the *Bōken! Hakken! Dai-meiro* (Adventure! Discovery! Spectacular Mazes) series, as well as the similarly conceived *Kobito no mori no jūninin* (Twelve Munchkins in the Forest).

# Adventure! Discovery! Spectacular Mazes: The Legend of Magicalune

Hiroaki Hara & Birthday



Ages 6+

310 x 227 mm

33 pages

Hardcover

ISBN 978-4591126745

Rights sold: China, France and

Korea

This is one of 12 volumes to date in the *Bōken! Hakken! Dai-meiro!* (Adventure! Discovery! Spectacular Mazes) series of books that call for readers to solve mazes and hidden-picture puzzles as part of a fanciful story. The reader in effect becomes the hero who takes action and moves the story forward, variously becoming a pirate, flying into outer space, searching for the Kingdom of Dinosaurs, becoming a wizard, entering an automobile race, and so forth. The cast of characters changes from volume to volume along with the worlds depicted, but characters from other volumes sometimes drop in as well, creating links between the stories that are understood only by those who have read the other books in the series. Each volume contains more than 20 mazes and two to three hundred hidden pictures for the reader to find, and with plenty of additional puzzles as well, the books can easily keep a child entertained for an entire day.

In this volume, the story is set at the Zardry Wizard Academy in the Kingdom of Magicalune. Aspiring wizards from around the kingdom come to the academy with their sights set on becoming one of the “Miracle Masters”—as wizards of the six elements are called in this world—to replace the five who were felled by the dark wizard Deathverado after he escaped from where he’d been locked away. As Deathverado causes repeated disturbances, eleven fledgling wizards and the hero (reader) are tasked with finding the “dark stones” that Deathverado has scattered about the kingdom—stones with the power to take possession of people and objects and control them. Peace will return to the land only when they have been recovered. They must battle with the Sky Giant, Red Dragon, Death Dragon, and others as they pursue their mission.

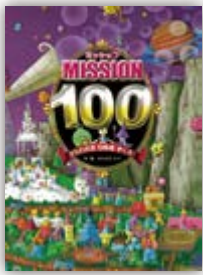
At the end of the volume are six pages of answer diagrams, laid out in an easy to understand format. Also included as a bonus are a variety of game cards, as well as information cards on the “manimals” in the story, which can be detached from the book for additional fun play.



## About the Author

Hiroaki Hara & Birthday teams the creative group Birthday Co., Ltd. with its president Hiroaki Hara, who is a picture-book author in his own right. As a maker of video and trading-card games, Birthday is known for its creation of a variety of characters and worlds. It developed the role-playing video game *Daikaijū monogatari* (The Great Shell Monsters) and produced the video game *Cocoro no cocoron*, among many others. In collaboration with Hiroaki Hara, the group has produced the role-playing picture books in the *Bōken! Hakken! Dai-meiro* (Adventure! Discovery! Spectacular Mazes) series, as well as the similarly conceived *Kobito no mori no jūninin* (Twelve Munchkins in the Forest).





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 Ema Kahiroda  
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 Kaori Hayashi  
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