



**POPLAR**  
PUBLISHING



**Foreign Rights Catalog 2021**

# About Us

---

For many years since the company's founding in 1947, Poplar Publishing Co., Ltd. made a name for itself in the Japanese publishing industry as a children's books publisher. Poplar expanded into books for adult readers in 1999. Today, the company puts out bestsellers in a diverse range of genres for both children and other audiences.

Many Poplar novels such as "Rinco's Restaurant," "Midnight Bakery," and "Sweet Bean" have been turned into feature films or television shows. "Lonely Castle in the Mirror" was given the Bookstore Grand Prize, one of Japan's most high-profile awards for novels. Numerous other Poplar titles have ranked high as nominees for the award, including "Pieta," "You're a Good Kid," "The Lion's Snack," and "What You Are Looking For Is In The Library." These titles have been translated into many other languages.

Poplar publications from other genres have also gone on to become best-sellers and translated for other countries. They include practical books about education, raising children, health, and lifestyles, as well as publications about business and personal empowerment, nonfiction titles, books for senior citizens, and more.

# Contact

---

## **POPLAR Publishing Co., Ltd.**

Sumitomo Fudosan Kojimachi First Bldg.,  
4-2-6 Kojimachi, Chiyoda-Ku,  
Tokyo, 102-8519 JAPAN

<https://www.poplar.co.jp/foreignRights/>  
[foreign-rights-sales@poplar.co.jp](mailto:foreign-rights-sales@poplar.co.jp)

---

# *Contents*

---

Novel/Fiction .....	2
Backlist .....	12
Non-fiction .....	15
Backlist .....	21



# What You Are Looking For Is In The Library

Author : **Michiko Aoyama**



softcover

Pub month: Nov. 2020  
ISBN 978-4-591-16798-4  
188mm x 128mm  
304 pages  
Rights sold: Italian,  
Korean, simplified  
Chinese, Thai, and tradi-  
tional Chinese

## Synopsis by Alison Watts

What are you looking for? is the question that enigmatic community center librarian, Sayuri Komachi, puts to those who come to her for book recommendations. The list of titles that she gives them, however, always contains an unexpected addition that becomes a catalyst for the borrower to gain new perspectives and gives them the impetus to make changes in their career and life. This wise and heartwarming novel is a meditation on the role and meaning of work and society. It shows the powerful influence that a good listener, books, and the right words at the right time can have.

The novel is comprised of five chapters, each narrated by a visitor to the library in the small community center known as Hatori Community House. Each protagonist is at a different juncture in their career, wrestling with dilemmas and issues particular to that stage of life. The conversation that they have with Sayuri Komachi, turns out to be a life-changing encounter

In chapter one, 21-year-old Tomoka is a junior sales attendant in the women's clothing section of a general merchandise store. Born and raised in regional Japan, she joined the company in order to move to Tokyo for a more exciting life. It is not what she expected, however, and she has become bored with both her work and life. As she has no skills that would allow her to switch jobs, she takes the advice of friend and colleague, Kiriya, to attend computer tuition classes at the community house. When she goes to the library there for books on computing, Ms. Komachi also recommends Guri and Gura. Tomoka remembers the well-known Japanese children's picture book from childhood but has a different experience reading it again as an adult. It inspires her to make Castella cake, like the mice in the book do, and she becomes determined to make a perfect Castella when her first attempt fails. In the course of doing so she begins to reflect on her careless attitude to work and life in general. She realizes the value of persistence and experience, and starts to make small changes in her lifestyle, becoming healthier and happier in the process. By the end, Tomoka has learned to take pride in her work, respect others' skills, and be patient while she works on self-improvement to be ready for new opportunities.

Ms. Komachi's recommendations in genres the borrower would not otherwise consider offer a gateway to new perspectives. Thirty-five-year-old Ryo in chapter two is conscientious and hardworking. He has a good position in the accounts department of a furniture maker but finds human relations difficult, a trait that in the workplace leaves him vulnerable to office politics. Ryo has a passion for antiques and dreams of opening his own store, but the older he gets the more he fears this dream will never be realized. His girlfriend, Hina, is a free spirit whose parents would like Ryo as a son-in-law because of his dependability. Ryo, however, is afraid of committing himself to marriage and losing the freedom to pursue his dream. Hina, who collects sea glass and makes fashion accessories, also wants to start a business. When she persuades Ryo to accompany her to a lecture at the community house, he visits the library seeking books on the topic. Ms. Komachi's surprise recommendation is a title from the British Royal Horticultural Society about the wonder of plants. Although Ryo has no interest in plants he becomes absorbed by the book, and reading about the interconnectedness of the plant world gives him insight into parallels with the human one. A leaflet he finds in the community house also leads him to the Cats Now bookstore, run by IT specialist Yasuhara and his wife. From Yasuhara, Ryo learns about the concept of parallel careers and the importance of a partner in making it work. Ryo almost loses Hina because of his inability to depend on others, but realizes just in time how much he has underestimated her. She is more practical and proactive than Ryo, and convinces him of the need to trust other people, as that is how society functions. Society, he comes to understand, is made up of community networks, much like those found in the plant world. When Hina proposes to Ryo he accepts, and together they begin to map out the path to achieve their common dream of starting a business.

In chapter three, forty-year-old Natsumi is frustrated at having been sidelined from her dream job as a magazine editor, and struggles with the demands of being the working mother of a two-year-old. On a visit to the library with her daughter, Ms. Komachi recommends Door to the Moon a book about astrology. Natsumi is dismissive of astrology but dips into the book and to her surprise finds in it ideas that help her to adjust her expectations and thinking, and to "go with the flow," as Ms. Komachi suggests. A reunion with the author whom Natsumi had recruited to write for the magazine provides her with further inspiration, and she feels less alone after talking with someone else who understands her position and frustrations. She has been fixated on being a magazine editor again but begins to see that there are other paths she could take. Deciding that she would like to work in children's book publishing instead, Natsumi starts to apply for other positions and eventually finds her perfect job at a publisher where children are welcomed in the workplace. Her husband is supportive of her move, and communications between them improve.

Thirty-year-old Hiroya in chapter four has lost his way in life and feels there is no place he belongs. He is prickly and defensive about being a NEET (not in education, employment, or training), and feels overshadowed by his successful older brother. As a child he loved manga and studied illustration at design school, but after a series of failed jobs he gave up working. His ambition to become a famous manga illustrator came to nothing and he never draws any-

## Contact

Asia...Poplar Publishing (foreign-rights-sales@poplar.co.jp)

The rest of the world...English Agency Japan / New River Literary Ltd (likangqin@newriveragency.com)

---

more. When he spots an obscure felted manga character at the community house market, he goes to the library to meet the person who made it. Conversing with Ms. Komachi about manga puts him at his ease. The library, he feels, is a place where he can belong and he begins to visit regularly. Hiroya is fascinated by the title she recommends him—*Evolution: A Visual Record*—and motivated to start drawing again. While reading the book he becomes intrigued by the story of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, whose role in developing the theory of evolution has generally been forgotten and overshadowed by the more famous Charles Darwin. Hiroya comes to understand that fame is not the only goal, and that simply thinking of people keeps them alive in other's minds.

When Nozomi, the trainee librarian, sees Hiroya's unusual drawings she begins to champion them, and he gains even more confidence. He is also motivated to continue drawing by a renewed friendship with a classmate from high school, Seitaro, who has continued to write, albeit unsuccessfully, while working for the Waterworks Bureau. Seitaro has never forgotten that Hiroya was the only one who was interested in reading his novels in high school. He finds success when an editor from Maple Publishing (none other than Natsumi from the previous chapter) picks up one of his manuscripts. Hiroya lands a temporary cleaning job in the library, which helps him adjust to a working routine, and by the end of the chapter he is beginning to turn things around, moving back into society and enjoying life again.

In the final chapter, sixty-five-year-old Masao finds a sense of community after retirement, revising his understanding of the meaning of work and society in the process as well as improving relations with his family. After forty-two years working for the same company, Masao feels lost without it: useless and stripped of his identity. He has no hobbies, no friends outside of work, and is helpless in the house, like many men of his generation. His younger, energetic wife, Yoriko, persuades him to attend a Go class at the community house, where she teaches computing. When Masao goes to the library for books on Go, Ms. Komachi also recommends him a poetry title by twentieth-century Japanese poet Shinpei Kusano, particularly beloved for his poems about frogs, and this is the beginning of Masao's rediscovering poetry as a means of self-expression. Discussing poetry also brings him closer to his daughter, Chie, with whom he has not had any real communication since she was small. He is touched when she tells him that she has always remembered his telling her as a child that walking crabwise expands your view of things. Poems, like books, have different meanings depending on the reader, a message he is reminded of by the felted crab mascot he received from Ms. Komachi. Masao also asks Chie to teach him how to make rice balls (a suggestion from Tomoka, who he meets when shopping with Yoriko at the store where Tomoka works) so he can make them to show Yoriko his appreciation of her.

Along with her surprise recommendations, Ms. Komachi gives each person one of her handmade felted mascots. Tomoka receives a frying pan, Ryo a cat, Natsumi a globe of the Earth, Hiroya an airplane, and Masao a crab. The mascots become significant talismans to the owners, but when Masao asks how she selects them, Ms. Komachi tells him that there is no secret. She chooses at random and it is up to the recipient to draw their own meaning from them.

With her extraordinary appearance and uncanny ability to read people, the mystery of Sayuri Komachi deepens with each chapter. What is her secret? Does she have special powers? What is the significance of the felt mascots, and how does she choose them? It turns out there is nothing magical about her; she is someone with exceptional typing skills and an encyclopedic knowledge of books who has honed the art of being a skilled listener. Although the reader gradually learns a little more of her history, it is never revealed in great detail. Sayuri unexpectedly found love late in life, and somehow the Honeydome cookies are connected with that, but it is not revealed how. She also used to be a school nurse, but decided to retrain as a librarian when her circumstances changed. In fact, it was through this work as a nurse that she first met Nozomi, the bright cheerful trainee librarian, who at the time was a school refuser. Nozomi found refuge in the sickroom but was eventually able to resume her studies with the help of Sayuri.

Sayuri tells each borrower that she is not doing anything special: it is the protagonists who take action, and all she does is simply to provide them with an opportunity to expand their minds and draw inspiration if they choose. In this way Tomoka finds motivation to take pride in her work and care for herself; Ryo realizes the importance of connections and learns to trust other people; Natsumi becomes more flexible in her thinking and finds a new career by adapting to her circumstances; Hiroya becomes able to accept that job satisfaction is possible without fame and recognition, and establishes new bonds in the community; while Masao reevaluates the value of poetry and community, and comes to understand that work alone is not a measure of a person's worth in society.

The skillfully interwoven stories add up to a novel that is a paean to libraries, books, and community, and was, appropriately, runner-up in the 2021 Japan Booksellers' Awards. Its message that books are a source of wisdom and inspiration is one that will resonate widely. Anyone who has ever felt at an impasse in their life or career will surely find something to identify with within these pages.

➔ English sample available

### About the author

**Michiko Aoyama** : Born in Aichi in 1970. Currently living in Yokohama. After graduate school, worked as reporter for a Japanese newspaper in Sydney for two years. After her return to Japan, worked as a magazine editor at a publishing company in Tokyo, began writing novels, and won an honorable mention for the Palette Novel Grand Prize in 2002. Made her debut in 2017 with *A Cup of Cocoa on Thursday* which won the Miyazaki Book Grand Prize. Also, *A Cup of Cocoa on Thursday* and her second novel *Receiving Cat Prophecies beneath a Tree* were nominated for the Miraiya Novel Grand Prize. *What You Are Looking For Is In The Library* was nominated for the Japan Booksellers' Awards.



# The Tidy Up

Author : **Tsukiko Ochi**



softcover

Pub month: Mar. 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-16900-1

188mm x 128mm

215 pages

## Keywords

Tidying up, Preparing for death.

Asa offers to help tidy the apartment of the old lady next door. Unexpectedly, their pasts turn out to be subtly interlinked. A simultaneously sad and heartwarming masterpiece.

➔ English sample available

## About the author

**Tsukiko OCHI** : Born in 1965 in Fukuoka. Debuted with *There's Something Not Quite Right with Me Today* in 2006.

## Contents

Asa is a single woman. An unexpected turn of events leads to her helping Yae, the old woman next door, tidy her apartment. Asa gets down to work, sharing some of her own cleaning techniques with her neighbor. In the course of tidying, she learns about Yae's past life. That's when Asa's own childhood memories of being locked in a filthy apartment by her single mother start coming back...

All the baggage and the grief we carry with us through life. What path through life did Yae and Asa choose, as they worked their way through their respective issues? A sad but ultimately heartwarming work with real emotional heft.



# *The Night is Not Always Dark*

Author : **Haruna Terachi**



softcover

Pub month: Apr. 2019

ISBN 978-4-591-16274-3

188mm x 128mm

319 pages

**An extraordinary mascot that does good deeds and transforms the character of a neighborhood.**

**Touching new interlinked story collection by an up-and-coming writer.**

## About the author

**Haruna TERACHI** : Born in Saga in 1977. Currently living in Osaka. Won the Poplar New Novelist Award in 2014 with *Violeta* which came out the following year. Won the Sakuyakonohana Prize in 2020. *The Night is Not Always Dark* was nominated for the Yamamoto Shugoro Prize. Won the Kawai Hayao Prize for Stories for *Sewing Water* in 2021.

## Contents

Life goes on even in the absence of miracles.

A touching work by an up-and-coming writer.



paperback

Pub month: Jun. 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-17025-0

151mm x 105mm

335 pages

Akatsukimachi is a district on the outskirts of Osaka. The local old market, Akatsuki Market, is scheduled to close, but the market's mascot, Akatsukin, seems to have gone missing, only to start popping up all around town helping people. What on earth is going on? Over time, Akatsukin's actions start to influence the local people, changing them for the better.

A series of fifteen interconnected heartwarming tales that detail the overlapping lives of people in the neighborhood. An author who is currently attracting a lot of notice explores the everyday lives and struggles of people today.

## Critical notices

The writing is perfect: gentle, pastel-colored, but by no means saccharine. It's only when you get to the end of this book that you grasp the full significance of its title.

— Miyuki Miyabe, writer (*Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper, May 26, 2019)



# *Kyoto Hannari, Marriage of Convenience*

## *Enjoy fresh sake in the old city*

Author : **Elena Katoh**



paperback  
Pub month: Jul. 2020  
ISBN 978-4-591-16714-4  
148mm x 105mm  
292 pages



paperback  
Pub month: Jul. 2021  
ISBN 978-4-591-17067-0  
148mm x 105mm  
271 pages

**Saya weds Shindo, a sake brewer, in a marriage of convenience. Neither have much romantic experience. Will the marriage last? The story of an accidental couple in Kyoto.**

### About the author

**Elena KATOH** : Born in Kyoto, where she still lives today. A very popular novelist in the BL (Boys Love) genre. Has recently expanded her range to more general light literature.

### Contents

Saya, who loves the characterful old buildings of Kyoto, works for a company that does renovations there. One day she is fired from her job after overstepping “boundaries,” out of the innate goodness of her heart. Kicked out of the company accommodation, she is completely at sea—homeless, jobless and boyfriendless—when she meets Shindo who works at a small, but historic sake brewery.

Shindo was looking for a woman to marry so he could take over the family brewery. Saya ends up tying the knot with him in a phony marriage of convenience.

Surrounded by an eccentric supporting cast ranging from the blonde-haired monk at the next-door temple to the other brewery workers, Saya has to tackle her responsibilities as a brewer’s bride while also making sure that no one sees through the bogus nature of her marriage. Having initially dismissed Shindo as a bad boy Kyotoite interested only in sake brewing, she is gradually won over by his clumsy kindness—and the fake wife starts to fall in real love.

The story of a marriage of convenience that encapsulates all the magic of Kyoto, written by an author born and resident in the city.

### The sequel

*Kyoto Hannari, Marriage of Convenience*  
*The Trials of Love. A Time to be Topsy*

Will the phony couple develop into a real, loving couple at the end of the day? Saya has married Shindo, who runs an old sake brewery in Kyoto, in a marriage of convenience. The two of them were just starting to fall in love with one another, when the appearance of a brilliant and handsome temple carpenter and the lady boss of a rival sake brewery suggest that trouble is looming...

### Keywords

Marriage of convenience,  
Sake brewery, Romance,  
Love story





# Inujun “Winter” Series

Author : Inujun



paperback  
Pub month: Feb. 2019  
ISBN 978-4-591-16215-6  
148mm x 105mm  
319 pages  
Rights sold: Vietnamese

**Over 200,000 copies in the series sold in Japan.**  
**Stories of pure love, packed with emotion and surprise.**  
**You’ll be in floods of tears.**

## About the author

**INUJUN** : Born in Nara and currently living in Shizuoka. Inujun debuted in 2014 by winning the Japan Keitai Novel Grand Prize, cosponsored by The Mainichi Newspapers Co. and Starts Publishing, for the light novel *Someday, Sleep Will Come* (Starts Publishing). In 2019, it was turned into a drama series on the Fuji TV on Demand (FOD) streaming service and was subsequently broadcast on terrestrial channels. In 2019, he also won the Shizuoka Bookstore Grand Prize for *This Winter, To You Who Will Be Gone* (Poplar Publishing) in the “most want to make a movie” category. He is a prolific author whose works deal with life and death.

## Contents

**Volume I of the “Winter” series**  
***This Winter, To You Who Will Be Gone***

**You’ll be in tears at the emotional punch of the surprise ending.**  
**A book you’ll read in a single sitting.**

Natsumi Ikuta is a 24-year-old woman with a job at a stationery company. Satisfied neither with her work nor her personal life, she feels listless. One evening she stays late at the office. A fire breaks out and she blacks out. She regains consciousness only to find a mysterious man standing in front of her. Introducing himself as Atsuki, he says, “This winter, you will die!” The twist at the end of the book is an absolute zinger that will transform your tears of sorrow into tears of joy. Volume I of Inujun’s “Winter” series truly packs quite a punch.

➔ **English synopsis is available.**

**Volume II of the “Winter” series**  
***This Winter, Looking for a Lost Love***

Rena has thought of nothing but work since a terrible tragedy deprived her of her adored high-school boyfriend. One day, when a friend of hers forces her to attend a matchmaking party, she bumps into Haru, an extraordinarily handsome young man. Out of nowhere, Haru informs Rena that “her character is ugly,” leaving her stunned. Haru then offers to change her character for the better, inexplicably following this up by presenting Rena with a black cat stuffed animal. This is a story of love in its purest form.

**Volume III of the “Winter” series**  
***That Winter, To Forgive You***

Sakura Fuyuno is a writer who blogs and writes poetry. One day, convinced that someone is following her around, she turns to a man sitting at a terrace café for help. He is Haruya Suzuki, a programmer from Shizuoka. Fortuitously, the two of them seem to be made for one another and they embark on a relationship. But Haruya suffers from partial memory loss as the result of a car accident. Over time, a shocking truth comes to light. There’s a terrific surprise ending guaranteed to bring tears to your eyes. The best story of love and forgiveness you will read all this winter.



paperback  
Pub month: Dec. 2019  
ISBN 978-4-591-16493-8  
148mm x 105mm  
285 pages



paperback  
Pub month: Jan. 2021  
ISBN 978-4-591-16890-5  
148mm x 105mm  
287 pages



# *In the Forgotten Place*

Author : **Shigeru Kurakazu**



softcover

Pub month: May 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-17009-0

188mm x 128mm

300 pages

Note: While *In the Forgotten Place* can be read and enjoyed independently, it is in fact volume III in the Nanaecho series with *Summer of the Black Swallowtail Butterfly* (volume I) and *Autumn of the Wizards* (volume II).

**A body frozen in ice. A 45-year-old secret.  
A series of interconnected riddles.  
A mystery masterpiece with a patina of fantasy  
that gets to grips with serious social issues.**

## About the author

**Shigeru KURAKAZU** : Born in 1969. After graduate school, taught Japanese literature at a university in Mainland China for five years. After his return to Japan, made his debut as a writer in 2011 with *Summer of the Black Swallowtail Butterfly* which won the Pureful Prize for Fiction Grand Prize. *The Kingdom with No Name*, which came out in 2018, was nominated for both the Japan SF Grand Prize and the Mishima Yukio Prize.

## Contents

Miwa is a high-school student who sees things outside the human realm. Getting lost in the snow, she wanders into an unfamiliar town. She comes across a man staring at her through a broken window. The man turns out to be dead...

Hiroaki, a detective, hears about Miwa's discovery of the body and rushes to the scene. The victim, a man by the name of Tonami, was killed with great cruelty, being tied up and starved over several days. As Hiroaki and his colleague Emi look into Tonami's past, some very unexpected facts come to light...

## Critical notices

A gritty real-life mystery with elements of fantasy horror. The two sides are brilliantly balanced throughout the work, each illuminating the other's darkness. I really loved the atmosphere of this book.

— Yukito Ayatsuji, writer

## Nanaecho Series (already published)



*Summer of the Black Swallowtail Butterfly*



*Autumn of the Wizards*



# *The Place Where the Butterflies Sleep*

Author : **Azusa Mizuno**



hardcover

Pub month: Apr. 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-17002-1

194mm x 133mm

430 pages

**When someone is falsely accused of a crime, a female TV reporter covering the case stumbles on a shocking truth. A socially aware entertainment that delves into crime, punishment and the true meaning of atonement.**

## About the author

**Azusa MIZUNO** : News reporter. Born in Tokyo. Graduated from Waseda University School of Humanities and Social Science and University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. Covered the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, the Imperial Family; worked on the nuclear power and city news desks; was a foreign correspondent in China and worked on the international desk. Directed and produced documentaries; worked on the news desk for TV evening news, as well as on the editorial committee for the medical, social security and education desks of an affiliated newspaper. Currently on the economics desk, covering the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet Office, while doubling as a news anchor. This is her first book.

## Contents

The author, a veteran news journalist, has produced a top-flight gritty and realistic mystery. Grounded in her own experience, it's well researched and intricately plotted.

"I had nothing to do with the case. The real culprit is still out there." These are the last words of a man sent to the gallows for a crime he did not commit. Time passes, and an elementary school child leaps to his death from the roof of his school. A network news reporter starts investigating what she thinks is a case of bullying only to discover that the dead boy's mother is in fact the daughter of a man who was sentenced to death based on a false charge. Are the two miscarriages of justice and the boy's death linked somehow? What is the truth the reporter finally discovers after a behind-the-scenes battle against the powers of the police?

## Critical praise

There are moments when you can really feel all the colors and smells of the child's young life. The author writes about such moments with genuine tenderness and affection. What I took away from this book was the sense of forgiveness. Forgiveness is found in truth, long since forgotten and sitting quietly in the dark somewhere. This is an emotional gut-punch of a story that puts that truth front and center.

— Naomi Kawase (Film director)

Was the death penalty justified? A reporter gets to grips with the darkness that the government is eager to conceal from view. The book has such a level of realism that I felt I was getting God's-eye view of the news I report on for my job.

— Kiyoshi Shimizu (Journalist)



# *A Story to Give to You Who Want to Die*

Author : Syun Ayasaki



softcover

Pub month: May 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-17008-3

188mm x 128mm

379 pages

## Keywords

Noble children, Novelist, Young adult fiction, Will make you cry

**“It’s because of you, that I want to write fiction.”**

**In this thrilling young adult mystery, Syun Ayasaki poses challenging questions to himself and to his readers.**

**As seen on TikTok**

## About the author

**Syun AYASAKI** : Born in Niigata in 1981. In 2009, won the Jury’s Favorite Award at the Dengeki Grand Prize for his first novel *Blue Sky Rain* (Media Works Bunko). Has produced numerous books since in the *Kachofugetsu* (Beauties of Nature) series (of which *Blue Sky Rain* is a part), and the *Kimi to Tokei* (You and the Watch) series (Kodansha). This book is his fortieth book.

## Contents

**“It’s because of you, that I want to write fiction.”**

**The author asks himself and his readers difficult questions in this controversial work.**

Riori Mimasaka is a novelist whose life is enveloped in mystery. Mimasaka has a passionate fan base throughout Japan. But just as Mimasaka is about to complete a popular series of books, news of Mimasaka’s death is announced. Mimasaka’s work comes in for unusually harsh criticism, and to make things worse, Sumire, a 16-year-old female fan, is inspired to follow her idol by committing suicide. Sumire (who fails in her attempt on her own life) explains that she saw no point in living if she could not read the end of Mimasaka’s story.

Later, seven people, including Sumire, gather at an abandoned school deep in the mountains. As Mimasaka fans, they hope that living in the school (a plot point from Mimasaka’s story) will help them figure out the ending of Mimasaka’s unfinished work. Then something that was never meant to happen happens!

A poignant coming-of-age mystery that delves into the author’s own preoccupations.



# The Mystery Store

Author : Junko Oyama



In a mysterious shop where anything can be deposited for ¥100 a day, the deposited items' secrets start to converge. A poignant but also heartwarming story.

Series has sold over 300,000 copies in Japan

## About the author

**Junko OYAMA** : Born in Tokyo. 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.

hardcover  
Pub month: May 2013  
ISBN 978-4-591-13467-2  
194mm x 136mm  
223 pages  
Rights sold: Korean, simplified Chinese, and traditional Chinese

## Contents

“We’ll take anything off you for 100 yen a day.” Sato Storage stands in a remote corner of Konpeito in Ashitamachi, 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 have their own back story... The author of *Nekoben* here weaves a poignant, heartwarming and slightly fantastical story. This best-selling series has sold more than 300,000 copies.

paperback  
Pub month: Jun. 2015  
ISBN 978-4-591-14527-2  
151mm x 105mm  
287 pages

## Further volumes in the series

## Keywords

¥100 per day, Mystery store, Deposited items, Secrets



*The Mystery Store:  
The Young Kirishima*



*The Mystery Store:  
Her Blue Bird*



*The Mystery Store:  
Phantom Fried Rice*



# The Lion's Snack

Author : Ito Ogawa



hardcover

Pub month: Oct. 2019

ISBN 978-4-591-16002-2

195mm x 135mm

255 pages

Rights sold: French,

Korean, simplified

Chinese, and traditional

Chinese

**What would you like your last snack to be?**

**When the protagonist discovers she hasn't long to live, she goes to an island hospice.**

**A moving story about eating and about living.**

**220,000 copies sold in Japan (as of August 2021)**

## About the author

**Ito OGAWA:** Born in 1973. Made her debut in 2008 with *Snail's Restaurant*.

Many of her subsequent books have been translated and published overseas. *Snail's Restaurant* was made into a movie in 2010. The book won the Bancarella Prize in Italy in 2011 and the Eugénie Brazier Prize in France in 2013. NHK made a TV series out of *Tsurukame Maternity Hospital* in 2012 and *Tsubaki Stationery Store* in 2017. *Tsubaki Stationery Store*, *Kirakira Republic* and *The Lion's Snack* were all nominated for the Bookstore Awards.

## Concept/Theme

Eating, Living

## Contents

What do you want to have as your final snack in this life?

Although still a young woman, Shizuku learns that she hasn't long to live. She decides to spend her last days in an island on Japan's Inland Sea. There, in the peaceful landscape, she starts thinking about what she really wanted to do with her life.

Every Sunday at the hospice, there is a snack time, when the residents get to request their favorite snack. Shizuku has trouble making up her mind...

Eating. Living. Dying...

With its warm depiction of the fate that awaits us all, this story will reawaken your awareness of how precious every passing moment is. Won second place at the 2020 Bookstore Awards and was turned into an NHKBS Premium TV series.

## A word from the author

When my mother was diagnosed with cancer, I spoke to her on the phone for the first time in several years. When she said she was afraid of death, I reminded her that we all die. Despite that, the overwhelming number of us see death as something unfathomable and terrifying. Although it wasn't finished before my mother died, I wrote this book in an attempt to make death just that little bit less frightening. I hope this story will be as comforting as a nice warm bowl of porridge for my readers.



# My Beautiful Garden

Author : **Yuu Nagira**



softcover

Pub month: Dec. 2019

ISBN

978-4-591-16485-3

188mm x 128mm

283 pages

Rights sold: Korean and  
Vietnamese

**A new masterwork by Yuu Nagira, author of 2020 Bookstore Grand Prize winner “Roving Moon” (her first standalone book)!**

“My Beautiful Garden” is her second standalone book and latest work. An emotional story all about redemption, it gently takes up the sense of being smothered by the world.

➔ **English sample available**

## Author profile

**Yuu NAGIRA** : Debuted in 2006 with “Egoist in Love.” Published works include “Biotope of the Gods,” “Sumire-so Familia,” and “Roving Moon.”

- A lengthy career in “boys’ love” (BL) novels and a popular writer in the genre.
- Has expanded into general literature due to her advanced writing prowess, publishing “Roving Moon,” her first standalone book, through Tokyo Sogensha at the end of August 2019.
- “Roving Moon” won the 2020 Bookstore Grand Prize

## Author Interview (in Japanese)

January 17, 2020, Read Sound Book, “‘My Beautiful Garden’ Author Yuu Nagira Discusses the Challenges of Human Relationships: ‘Gathering is Synonymous with Exclusion’”

<https://realsound.jp/book/2020/01/post-486660.html>

## Contents

There is a space on the roof of an apartment building, and in the back there is a shrine for cutting off relationships. This story is about visitors to the shrine who suffer anguish in their lives, and about the self.

Mone, a girl in elementary school, lives with her stepfather, Tori. In the morning, Ro, who lives in the same building, comes over to their place and all three eat together. Mone and Tori are not related by blood. Some people consider their lifestyle peculiar, but they have fun times every day.

On the roof of the building where the three live is a small shrine that Tori takes care of. The locals refer to it familiarly as “the rooftop shrine” or “the relationship ender.” Worshipped here is a deity of abstinence from foods, which one performs in hope of having one’s desire granted. People say the deity can break any bad habit and end any inauspicious relationship. Visitors who feel weighed down from all sorts of bonds come to this place.



## Pieta

Author : Masumi Oshima



paperback  
Pub month: Jan. 2014  
ISBN 978-4-591-13771-0  
151mm x 105mm  
391 pages

“We were really and truly happy orphans.”

A representative work by a Naoki Prize writer that was the second runner-up for the 2012 Bookstore Grand Prize.

It is the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Venice, during the City of Water’s heyday. The musical composer Vivaldi, who wrote “Four Seasons,” had led the all-female chorus and ensemble for charity concerts at Pieta, an orphanage. One day, Emilia, a former student of his, receives word of her teacher’s passing. Guided by a mystery found in a piece of sheet music, the story unfolds. Based on historical fact, “Pieta” is a tour de force offering an animated depiction of the interaction and bonds between women.



## Kitasato University School of Veterinary Medicine Dog Club!

Author : Yuka Katano



paperback  
Pub month: April 2012  
ISBN 978-4-591-12916-6  
151mm x 105mm  
373 pages

Young members of a university club busy themselves around town to save cats and dogs with no place to go. It’s a touching work of nonfiction about love, passion, and facing up to the realities of life.

- A true story based on research of an actual university club
- Depicts the battles fought by Kaisaku Ota, now a practicing veterinarian, during his days at veterinary school
- A story that was serialized as a comic in an unusual arrangement in both Shogakukan Shonen Sunday and Akita Shoten’s Elegance Eve, each of which was later released in paperback form.

### Latest News

- A film adaptation is released in 2021! Starring Kento Hayashi and Taishi Nakagawa. Directed by Tetsuo Shinohara.
- In May 2020, Dog Club founder and current veterinarian Kaisaku Ota’s appearance on Fuji Television’s “The Nonfiction” generated a huge response.





# *Doing It My Way Is My Secret Weapon*

## *How I became a world-class sushi chef*

Author : Takayoshi Watanabe



paperback  
 Pub month: Jun. 2021  
 ISBN 978-4-591-17027-4  
 173mm x 109mm  
 222 pages

Prepared to accept his own failings and complexes, he made doing things his own way into an advantage, achieving global fame through deft use of social media. The master chef's secrets all explained in this one volume!

### About the author

**Takayoshi WATANABE** : Sushi chef and third-generation proprietor of Teruzushi sushi restaurant. Born in Tobata ward in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka prefecture, in 1977. A passionate practitioner of judo from junior high school to university, he did his apprenticeship in local hotels until the age of 27, when he started working under his father at Teruzushi. After working on the sales side, he was put in charge of the restaurant counter where his passion for high quality local ingredients and uniquely flamboyant style of service earned him a reputation as well as fame on social media. He succeeded in getting 5,000 customers a year to come to his out-of-the-way restaurant. In 2021 was awarded an Instagram official badge. In 2020, he was honored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as a “Ryori Master,” a title reserved for chefs who are deeply committed to Japanese food culture and its promotion.

### Overview

Mixing the author's personal account with discussions between him and other entrepreneurs, this book explores the techniques Watanabe used to make Teruzushi the world's best-known sushi restaurant and profiles its future path. It is recommended for young people who are unsure of their course in life but know they want to do something big and bold, people who have taken over a second- or third-generation family business, or simply people who adore sushi!

### Contents

Teruzushi is a sushi restaurant in Tobata ward, Kiyakyushu. It is frequented by celebrities, a hot topic on social media, has over 130,000 Instagram followers, has placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, and is swamped with offers from around the world to take part in events.

But how did a provincial sushi restaurant end up becoming a world-class eatery that people from all over the world clamor to get into?

This book shows you how to overcome the fear of failure, jettison the slavish adherence to the conventional way of doing things, accept your own failings and complexes and be true to yourself and maximize your strengths as you reach out to a global audience through social media.



# One Sheet Marketing

Author : Takanori Miura



softcover

Pub month: Mar. 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-16899-8

188mm x 128mm

350 pages

## Keywords

Tenro-in, Marketing, Miura, Bookstores

The new marketing strategy implemented by an entrepreneur who launched 11 bookstores from scratch in the teeth of a publishing recession. This is a strategy anybody can use.

## About the author

**Takanori MIURA:** Born in Miyagi in 1977. CEO of Tokyo Prize Agency. Owner of Tenro-in bookstore chain. Novelist, writer, editor, and photographer. Editor-in-chief of *Reading Life* magazine. President of Tenro-in theater troupe. Part-time lecturer at Taisho University's faculty of creative expression.

Tenro-in, the bookstore Miura founded, has expanded to 10 stores and a studio in Japan. Hime Photography, Miura's company which involves him taking professional photographs on a solo basis, has grown and now takes some 15,000 photographs per month of which 6,000 are supplied to customers. He is expanding all his businesses based on his one sheet marketing approach.

He has been featured on and contributed to television (NHK, TV Asahi, BS11, Bunkahoso, TV Tokyo, Fuji TV); the radio (J-Wave, NHK Radio); and newspapers and magazines (*Nikkei Shimbun*, *Nikkei MJ*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Tokyo Shimbun*, *Brutus*, *Shukanbunshun*). He has been profiled in *Aera* magazine and writes a book review column in *Weekly Diamond* and *Nikkei Business* magazines.

## Overview

The book expounds a practical and reproducible theory of marketing for people who want to develop the capacity to earn money in a way that fits their personality. It divides the crucial "core" of business into seven elements, deepens readers' understanding with "56 questions to earn an additional ¥200,000 per month," helps them grasp how the One Sheet theory works in practice based on a 12-part thematic approach, and finally provides 16 case studies offering valuable real-world insights.

## Contents

The One Sheet Marketing put forward in this book is a completely new theory of marketing. It consolidates various often hard-to-understand marketing theories onto a single sheet of paper by using the Seven Marketing Creations, techniques that anyone can easily master. Getting a grasp on this new theory will empower you to understand how business works from a marketing perspective and to create your own compact marketing strategies on a single sheet of paper.

## Excerpted Table of Contents

Section 1	The 7 Marketing Creations (The basics)
Section 2	Breaking down Marketing Systems (Practical applications)
Section 3	The Anatomy of One Sheet Marketing (Case Study)



# *How Women and Men Misunderstand One Another*

*The female brain and its focus on empathy.*  
*The male brain and its focus on evaluation.*

Author : **Ihoko Kurokawa**



paperback  
Pub month: Sep. 2020  
ISBN 978-4-591-16764-9  
173mm x 109mm  
198 pages

**An author with cumulative sales of 1.2 million books. The popular AI researcher's instruction manual for men and women—all firmly grounded in the neuroscience.**

## About the author

**Ihoko KUROKAWA** : Born in Nagano in 1959. Graduated from the physics department of the science faculty of Nara Women's University. Worked as an AI researcher at Fujitsu Social Science Laboratory before setting up Kansei Research Inc. She pioneered the world's first method for analyzing the "feel of words," which she used to develop numerous product names and marketing strategies. She has written numerous bestsellers that explain human thought and behavior with a light and humorous touch. In 2015, she published *Book of Heroes* (Poplar Publishing), which appealed to all ages with its accessible explanations of how to boost your life chances based upon neuroscience.

## Overview

An AI researcher who has studied the female brain for over 30 years discusses the differences between the male and the female brain. This work provides all women (and men who value their female counterparts and want them to shine) with a "neuroscientifically proven" instruction manual for both genders that will help women thrive and be happy in advanced societies.

## Contents

An indispensable bible for women, this book also shows male readers what women are really thinking and feeling. Why don't women's bosses understand them properly? Why can't women really talk to their husbands? Why does trying harder not lead to greater feelings of satisfaction for women? The better you understand the differences between the male and female brain, the more successfully you can avoid trouble between the genders.

## Preface (excerpt)

I wrote this book for women. It is an instruction manual for women to get the maximum benefit from their brains. If men read it, they too can gain a deeper understanding of the female brain. Think of it like this: it's a book that will provide you with a behind-the-scenes peek at what makes your wife tick! Whether you're a man or a woman, knowing the ins and outs of the female brain is guaranteed to be a major advantage in life. It's definitely worth your while to read this book.



# Japan and the World: Towards a Global Education

Author : **Tomoko Kitagawa**



paperback  
Pub month: Feb. 2021  
ISBN 978-4-591-16893-6  
173mm x 109mm  
190 pages

## Keywords

History, Women,  
Leadership, Education,  
Management, Business,  
Life, Negotiation

**How does the world outside Japan view the women of the Sengoku Period?**

**What is “Lady Samurai,” the lecture on Japanese history that has won acclaim in the U.S, Europe and the Middle East?**

## About the author

**Tomoko KITAGAWA** : Historian. Received her Ph.D. from Princeton University. Taught a class called “Lady Samurai” at Harvard. As a result of her lecture tours in the United States, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the subject of women in Japanese history is garnering ever more interest worldwide.

## Overview

Based on “Lady Samurai,” a series of lectures given at Harvard and delivered on the international circuit, this book is about the lives of women who found peaceful, non-military solutions to problems in Japan’s Warring States Period (1467 - 1615). A reappraisal of Japanese history for readers who want to learn the lessons of the past.

## Contents

What do people outside Japan see in the Japanese women who lived in the Warring States Period? “Lady Samurai,” a lecture course about the lives of the women from this turbulent time in Japanese history, proved a hit at Harvard University. Author Tomoko Kitagawa then went on to deliver her lectures all over the world, from South Africa to Dubai and the U.K. What makes these women’s stories capable of transcending all boundaries of race or religion? This is a new kind of historical essay that applies new perspectives, enabling us to extract lessons from the lives of Japanese historical figures like Nene, wife of the powerful feudal lord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Christian convert Galasha Hosokawa.

## Excerpted Table of Contents

### Part 1: Nene and the women of Hideyoshi

- Nene’s alternatives to military power
- Doing what’s needed for a stable existence
- Overcoming difficult times
- Adapting to change and starting over—and over

### Part 2: Japan’s “Lady Samurai” on the global stage

- Women writing letters
- Did women fight with actual weapons?
- Evoking the image of Osaka with folding screens (Dubai)
- Lady Samurai: Geisha or spy?
- Understanding the historic links between Japan and the outside world (Africa)
- Lady Samurai and the Queen of England (U.K.)
- Religion must be part of the Lady Samurai perspective



# *Grumpy Grandpa and Grumpy Grandma's History of Japan*

Author : Hikari Otsuka



paperback  
 Pub month: Oct. 2020  
 ISBN 978-4-591-16763-2  
 173mm x 109mm  
 232 pages

## Keywords

Ageing society, Elderly,  
 Japanese History,  
 Classics

Old people whose unbridled appetites and cunning enabled them not just to survive, but to thrive in past times. What do the classics teach us about their life secrets?

## About the author

**Hikari OTSUKA** : Born in 1961. Graduated from Waseda University's School of Humanities and Social Science as a Japanese History major. Writes essays on the classics.

## Overview

Many people mistakenly think that life in the old days was short and that old people played no significant role. This account of the lives of old people who lived big, bold lives in Japan's past completely subverts that idea and will transform your concept of what being old means in today's world too. Reading this book is a real shot in the arm.

## Contents

The old people who survived and thrived in past times, thanks to their appetites and their shrewdness.

This book contains anecdotes about little known old people from history: the monk who enjoyed political dominance at well past one-hundred years old; the old lady who recorded the last days of Shibata Katsuie; Ikkyu, the old monk who was quite obsessed with sex; Kyokutei Bakin, the novelist who kept writing even after becoming old and blind. The book looks at the problems of the elderly today and finds historic parallels such as the longevity boom of the Edo period and the historic equivalent of the so-called "8050 problem."\*

It's time to turn to the classics to discover the secrets to living a big, bold and long life.



# *The Philosophy of Experience*

## *Using philosophy to get the most out of life.*

Author : Yamcha



softcover

Pub month: Jun. 2021

ISBN 978-4-591-17023-6

170mm x 128mm

223 pages

**What use can philosophy be in our lives?  
This practical guide provides the only right answer.**

### About the author

**YAMCHA** : Completed graduate studies at Tohoku University. Writer on philosophy, manga author, businessman. First became popular after launching a blog which explained philosophical and scientific concepts in an accessible way. Currently enjoying a novel experience by broadcasting programs about philosophy on the Shirasu streaming platform.

### Overview

By providing a “checklist of experiences” for people who are just drifting vaguely through life (often without being aware of it themselves), this book teaches us how to perceive, become properly aware of, and enjoy the sort of everyday experiences we all too often overlook. Reading this book will bring you closer to a happy and fulfilled life. Your physical sensations will resonate for longer, you will become better able to communicate, your prejudices and preconceptions will evaporate, and your language and thoughts will grow deeper and richer.

### Contents

What practical use can philosophy be in our lives? Knowledge is losing its value on our all-too-practical age.

But the world is full of new experiences. We must live our everyday lives, taking care to savor the experiences that come our way.

Many of us don’t do that. Don’t live an aimless and unfocused life. Think about what is in front of you! Think about what you are doing and why!

This is the definitive practical philosophy book. Your physical sensations will resonate for longer, you will become better able to communicate, your prejudices and preconceptions will evaporate, and your language and thoughts will grow deeper and richer.

The book ends with a “Checklist of Experiences” listing over 5,000 experiences for you to consciously enjoy.

### Excerpted Table of Contents

Chapter 1	The Philosophy of Experience
Chapter 2	The Checklist of Experiences and its Positive Effects
Chapter 3	The Proper Technique to Really “Experience” Things
Chapter 4	Checklist of Experiences



# Sixteen-year-old Storytellers

Authors : **Nayuta GANBE, Honoka TSUDA, Akane AIZAWA** Editor : **Toshiro SATO**



softcover

Pub month: Feb. 2016

ISBN 978-4-591-14822-8

188mm x 129mm

223 pages

## Keywords

earthquake disaster,  
Tohoku earthquake and  
tsunami, ethics, children,  
society, counseling, psy-  
chology, disaster recov-  
ery, nonfiction, life, death

**Let us speak of that day; let us speak of the future.**

**Children, rising with hope from a scene of devastation.  
Stories of the future, from authors who experienced the 2011  
Tohoku earthquake and tsunami as fifth-graders.**

**Winner of the 2017 Child Welfare Cultural Award**

**→ English sample available**

## Author profiles

At the time of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011, authors **Nayuta Ganbe**, **Honoka Tsuda**, and **Akane Aizawa** were fifth-graders at the Omagari Elementary School in Higashimatsushima, Miyagi prefecture. As of January 2016, all three were first-year students at high school in Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture.

**Toshiro Sato** is from Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture. Since 1987, he has been working as a Japanese teacher at junior high schools in Miyagi prefecture. At the time of the disaster, in which he lost a sixth-grade daughter, he was teaching at the Daiichi Onagawa Junior High School (currently the Onagawa Junior High School). He retired from teaching in March 2015. He and other surviving family members created the “Committee for Considering the Meaning of Young Lives,” which delivers lectures at disaster prevention events throughout Japan.

## Contents

Stories that can only be told by these children upon having reached sixteen years old.

This book was published on 11 March 2016, five years following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The city of Higashimatsushima in Miyagi prefecture, which was severely damaged in the tsunami, is home to three certain high school students. Rather than simply relegating their painful experiences to the past, they have instead become storytellers helping people to learn from what they saw. This book presents their feelings, their doubts, and the paths of their lives over the previous five years, along with the reasons why they feel they must keep talking about those heartbreaking days. Within their tales, we find a sense of mission and conflict that can survive even that great disaster.

While being a record of disaster as experienced by young children, this is also a book of hope as described in the future they envision.

**POPLAR**  
PUBLISHING

**Foreign Rights Catalog 2021**

Design: Mihoko Takahashi (POPLAR Publishing)