



A SELECTION OF TITLES  
FROM JAPAN  
FRANKFURT  
BOOK FAIR  
2024

**Vicki Satlow Literary Agency**

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Via Cenisio 16 - 20154 Milano (Italy)

CHISATO ABE

YATAGARASU

Over 2 million copies sold of this 10 book series of high fantasy inspired by Japanese mythology.

The series has been adapted into Mangas and an anime television show available on Apple tv.

Enter the world of the Yatagarasu, a society evoking Heian-era Japan, where the legendary three-legged crows that appear as a messenger of god in Japanese mythology live as humans in a parallel world.

Set in a grand-scale fantasy world conceived by the author, and filled the eponymous creatures known as Yatagarasu, which are shape-shifting ravens/crows, the story revolves around five Yatagarasu families who are able to transform between human and crow forms.

In the four corners of the domain, the Yatagarasu characters contend with power struggles, turmoil, conspiracy and natural disasters. They are forced to establish alliances and contend for favors to ensure their power.

In volume 1, four beautiful princesses from great noble families gather at the palace where only one will be chosen as a queen for the crown prince, who does not reveal himself to them. The protagonist is Yama Yukiyauchi, who is a member of this shape-shifting race that's been selected to assist Prince Wakamiya. Together, they deal with all sorts of oddities and the unfortunate commonalities of royal drama.

Various folkloric elements of Shinto mythology (including the eponymous crows) appear in the series, although the central part revolves around the relationship between the prince and his Yatagarasu.



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2012-present

**Rights sold**

- Russia (Ast)
- Simple Chinese (People's Literature)
- Traditional Chinese (Systemex)

Chisato Abe was born in Gunma Prefecture in 1991. She made her debut as a student at Waseda University, after receiving the 2012 Matsumoto Seicho Prize for her work which was later published. Her Yatagarasu series was selected as the winner of the Yoshikawa Eiji Bunko Prize for 2024.

# RINKO AKITANI

## THE MIRACLE OF NURSE UZUKI

**Winner of the Bessatsu Bungeishunju Prize of the Creative Writing Award 2023.**



### FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2024  
Pages: 286

This novel takes place in the intensive care ward of a general hospital. Nurse Uzuki, the main character, has a special ability: to see when a patient is “leaving behind” this world. She takes the time to resolve her patients’ unresolved issues. She is the nurse we all wish for in our final moments.

One day, while taking care of a man in his 50s, the protagonist sees a little girl standing quietly next to him. In reality, the girl is not there, she is the embodiment of the patient’s regret, a spiritual “remnant” of the man preparing to leave this world. Who is this little girl? And what happened to her? Uzuki’s struggles to resolve the problems left by various patients. Her patients are often barely able to speak anymore, so she must try to untangle the issue by talking to family, friends and colleagues. Once resolved, the patients’ “remnants” disappear, and they are quietly seen off, and nurse Uzuki has performed a little miracle.

We follow the life of this mid-career nurse, in a fascinating medical drama. Through the stories of her patients, the reader is forced to ponder life lessons, and reevaluate priorities.

**Rinko Akitani was a ward nurse for more than 10 years.**

**Vol.1** 30,323 copies sold.

**Vol.2** will be published in November 2024.

### EXCERPT

*I’m not used to it. It is not a real girl, but Mr. Oooka’s “leftover”.*

*At one point, I began to see the patient’s “regrets”. This is hardly a gift of our species. I alone see people who are not supposed to be there, things that are not supposed to be there. I can see them but I cannot touch them or interact with them. I am only seeing them unilaterally, and the “remnant” is probably not aware of me. It is as if the patient’s unresolved thoughts and feelings are projected on the screen as a three-dimensional picture. And apparently, “regrets” appear when patients become aware of their mortality.*

*I believe that if I can eliminate the “regrets,” the patient will have one less thing to fight against before peacefully passing.*

---

**Rinko Akitani** was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1980. After graduating from Yokohama City University College of Nursing (now the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine), she worked as a nurse in the ward for more than 10 years. After retirement, she published novels and essays on the media platform “note”. In 2023, *What You Can See in the Rabbit Moon* won the Bessatsu Bungei Shunju Award at the Creation Award 2023 sponsored by note. This is her debut novel.

# KYOKO HASUMI

## DOCTOR PEN

**A heartwarming story about past emotions packed into magic fountain pens.**



### FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2021  
Pages: 293

Tucked away down an atmospheric alley in Kobe, the tiny shop is the roost of owlishly wise Toma Fuyuki, who dispenses advice to his customers as he fixes their fountain pens. The motto of his store is: ***Fountain Pen Counseling will change your life.***

When it comes to repairing old pens, no one can compare with Toma. Simply looking at a pen is enough for him to grasp all the worries and difficulties of its owner, whom he gently guides towards a solution.

When unhappy university student Sawa Nonami takes a job as his assistant, she discovers the universe of eccentric fountain-pen aficionados whose lives intersect at his store. The experience will change her life in ways she could never have guessed.

Filled with fascinating details about fountain pen brands, designs, mechanisms, and inks along with plenty of reasons why these old-fashioned writing tools still matter today, this is a novel for pen lovers and for young people struggling to find their path in life.

#### Rights sold

Italy (Sperling & Kupfer)  
China

### EXCERPT

*Three days later, a car pulled up in front of Doctor Pen's shop.*

*"I believe I requested that the pen's owner come in person," Toma said. Sawa was confused...*

*"I'm here, aren't I?" Reito asked, setting the cup he was holding in his left hand on the table.*

*"No, I meant the person who has been using this pen," Toma answered. Reito froze. Toma opened a box he had set on the desk and took out the Waterman Edson pen.*

*"Pardon my saying so, but I don't believe you are the one who has been using this fountain pen, Mr. Terada." Sawa watched nervously as Reito scowled.*

*"What are you implying?" he snapped. "If you're going to start making bizarre accusations, I'll take my business to another shop. There are plenty of other fountain pen repairmen around."*

*The instant Reito reached out his left hand, Toma drew the Edson near. "I believe this pen's owner is right-handed," he said. Reito stared in amazement at his own extended hand. "And that they have quite a distinctive way of using it," he added. Sawa could hear Reito gulp.*

*"The question of which hand is simple," Toma continued. "You can tell by looking at how the nib is worn down. Now, your order said the ink was coming out too fast. Excessive ink flow is caused when a pen is dropped or knocked, causing the tip to bend, or when this slit here that runs toward the tip widens." He pointed to the bottom of the nib. "If the person using the pen presses down hard when they write, it's common for the slit to widen. But that's not the reason you're having a hard time using this pen. To make it easier to explain, I have here another Edson."*

*Toma took a pen of the same make and model but a different color from the desk drawer. He slowly removed the cap, peered through his magnifying glass at the nib, and then set both on the tray.*

*"This is a Diamond Black Edson I borrowed from a customer. The nib width is F, fine. Take a look at the nib like I've just done." Reito hesitated to pick up the magnifying glass and pen. "Go ahead," Toma urged. Copying Toma's movements, Reito held the nib behind the magnifying glass, but had trouble bringing it into focus. Eventually, he seemed to succeed. "The nib you are looking at now is the standard model sold by the company. Keep that shape in mind. Now please look at the Edson nib that you brought in. I have done nothing to it since receiving it." Reito was silent. "Well? Do you notice that compared to the other pen, the nib is longer?"*

---

**Kyoko Hasumi** (1965) was born in Sakai, Osaka, and graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Osaka University of Arts. Her debut novel won the Excellence Award in the Yokomizo Seishi Mystery and Horror Prize in 2010. In 2020 she won the Osaka Book One Project.

YUKI IBUKI

## SPINNING THE CLOUDS

Can a family on the verge of collapse be saved?

**A multigenerational tale portrays one family's bond through the ancient art of wool spinning.**



A cross-generational story that contrasts the incessant pressures of urban life with the practical challenges that confront a diffident teenager when she runs away from home to live with her grandfather in rural Japan. There, she learns how to work with wool. A red shawl, a treasured present from her late grandmother, becomes the key to untangling her emotions and bringing her estranged parents back together again.

This novel is sure to appeal to fans of 'cosy fiction', which has recently been a hugely popular genre of translated Japanese literature. The depiction of high schooler Mio's struggles, and the empathy shown throughout the novel, is sure to strike a chord with fans of *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*, while the many who enjoyed *The Cat Who Saved Books* or *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* will surely appreciate the themes of overcoming a difficult period and rediscovering joy in life.

In addition to the heartwarming storyline, the novel is a treasure trove for foreign readers with an interest in Japanese culture and arts as through Mio, we learn about the ancient crafts of wool-spinning and dyeing. The crafts portrayed in Ibuki's novel, born of a specific region and time, give the reader both an insight into the environments and ways of life of the people who created and developed them, and the story expresses a deep respect for the craftspeople who made them and passed them down to subsequent generations.

**This is an uplifting celebration of the traditional and tactile arts in an age of virtual reality, invoking both C.S. Lewis's *Tales of Narnia* and Kenji Miyazawa's *Night Train to the Stars*.**

### Rights sold

France (Albin Michel)  
Italy (Garzanti)  
Portugal (Presença)  
China, Vietnam

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## THE MIDNIGHT COACH

Not everything in life goes to plan, but the journey goes on regardless...

**The touching story of a long-distance coach driver and his family.**



Toshikazu Takahashi drives long-distance coaches travelling between Niigata and Tokyo. At one time he worked in a large company in Tokyo, but after becoming a coach driver, he and his family moved back to his parents' home in Niigata. However, relationships between his wife, Miyuki, and his mother soon grew strained, and his wife left, leaving the two children behind.

Now 16 years have since passed; Toshikazu's mother has died, his son Reiji has graduated university and is working in Tokyo, and his daughter Ayana has left home and found a man she is thinking of marrying. Suddenly without family obligations, Toshikazu thinks about moving in with his girlfriend Shiho in Niigata, but on the very day Shiho invites him to live with her, Reiji shows up suddenly, having quit his job in Tokyo, and things start to change between him and Shiho. There are also problems threatening his daughter's upcoming marriage.

Then, one day, Toshikazu bumps into his ex-wife Miyuki in the bus centre. He feels sorry for her, and brings the children to meet her. This novel presents a deft portrayal of a family for whom things don't always run smoothly, honestly conveying their starts and restarts.

**Shortlisted for both Shugoro Yamamoto Award and Naoki Prize.**

**Adapted to a film in 2018.**

**Yuki Ibuki** (1969) was born in Mie and graduated from Chuo University. After working for a publishing house, she made her literary debut in 2008. Her novels have won various prizes and have been made into films.

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# KEIGO HIGASHINO

## THE DREAM FLOWER

Over one million copies sold of this standalone thriller.

A sabre-wielding madman slaughters a family in the middle of the street, two children become friends after a chance encounter at a flower market, and an old man is found lifeless in his house: three fates that seem to have nothing in common, except perhaps a mysterious yellow flower with unsuspected powers. A masterful new plot by the master of origami detective fiction.



FICTION

Publisher: PHP publishers  
Publication: 2013  
Pages: 350

Following her cousin's incomprehensible suicide, Lino contacts her grandfather and discovers his extraordinary flower crops. Fascinated, she asked him to set up a blog to showcase his work. He agreed, but on one condition: not to post anything about a certain yellow flower she had seen at his house. A few days later, Lino visits his grandfather and finds his body lifeless. Realizing that the pot containing the enigmatic yellow flower has disappeared, Lino decided to post a photo of the cultivar online. She is soon contacted by a man called Gamo Yeesuke, who claims to be a botanist and advises her to delete the photo from the site. At his place, she accidentally meets her younger brother, Sota, who pretends to be a botanist even though he works for the police...

**Higashino's mystery delves into the human drama of people whose fates intersect over a mysterious flower.**

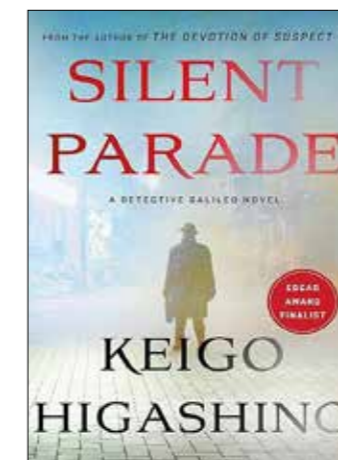
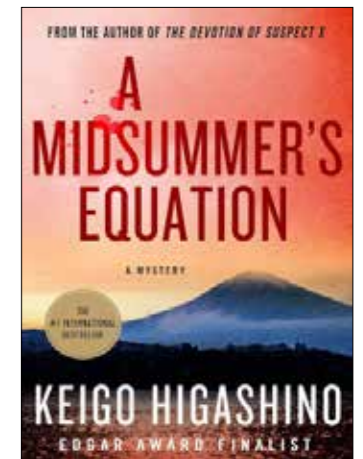
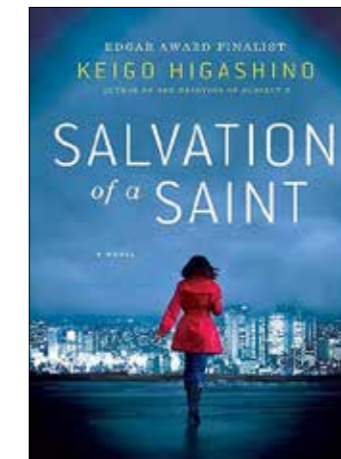
**This novel won the prize of the 26th Shibata Renzaburo Award and is available in a paperback edition.**

### Rights sold

France (Actes Sud)  
Italy (Mondadori)  
China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam

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By the author of the *Detective Galileo Series* and *The Kyoichiro Kaga Series*.



**Keigo Higashino** (1958) is Japan's most successful thriller and mystery writer. He served as the 13th President of Mystery Writers of Japan from 2009 to 2013. Born in Osaka, he started writing novels while still working as an engineer. He won the Edogawa Rampo Award which kicked off his career. In 1999, he won the Mystery Writers of Japan Award. In 2006, he won the 134th Naoki Prize and the 6th Honkaku Mystery Grand Prize.

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# RUI KODEMARI

## HAPPINESS IN THE FORM OF A CAT

For cat-lovers and readers of Takashi Hiraide's *The Guest Cat*.



### FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2011  
Pages: 262

Set against the constantly changing seasons of the American countryside, this story tells of the powerful bond that forms between a married couple and their beloved cat. It is based on author Rui Kodemari's own experiences with her cat, no longer of this world. Ayano, born and raised in Japan, and Michio, of Japanese descent but born and raised in the United States, are introduced to each other as potential marital partners in Tokyo. They instantly hit it off, decide to get married without delay, and Ayano moves to America. It is a second marriage for both of them, following unions that left each of them scarred.

Agreeing that they would like to have a cat as part of their new life together, they go to the local animal shelter, and when a Norwegian Forest kitten leaps out of the cage onto Michio's shoulder, they decide to take it home. The kitten quickly becomes the center of their life and a symbol of their happiness. Even the scratches it leaves on the furniture as it bounds about the house are endearing to them.

Stories about the cat are interwoven with the ebb and flow of the couple's love for each other, telling of how it responds to the appearance of wildlife outside the windows, what it did when left home alone while the couple went on a trip, and so forth. The young kitten grows into adulthood and ages far more quickly than its human guardians; the two look on with growing concern as the end appears near, and then their beloved companion is gone.

As close as Michio and Ayano have been as husband and wife, they respond differently to their loss—each grieving and healing in his or her own way—and this serves to bring subtle wrinkles in their relationship into relief.

### EXCERPT

*Female, short-haired and preferably Siamese because Siamese cats are sociable and love to sit on people's laps. These were Michio's requirements, but she hadn't seen any examples of this type in the SPCA's 'cat room' during our visit. I was about to give up and leave the room when I heard Michio's voice:*

*Michio and I let out an exclamation in unison, cheeks flushed. This time, I was speechless. "I was like those cats in cages, was waiting for someone to come and save me. At first, I believed my mother would come. But then I realized that I was deluded. So, I began waiting for someone, anyone, to get me out of the institution."*

*That's how I found out from Michio that he had been returned to the institution because he couldn't get along with the first family that took him in.*

*"That's why I want to find a cat suitable for both of us, for you and me, Ayano, so we can get along and live together for a long time. That's the whole point of what I'm doing. I'm not picky. If you don't understand what I'm saying, you don't have to. But if you do, please forgive me."*  
*"Forgive you?" The words flowed spontaneously from my lips. "Forgive me for earlier. I overreacted."*

*"Well then, I've won this battle big time. Give me a kiss as proof of your surrender," he said, offering his stubbly cheek to me. I brought my own closer and we kissed, but this time on the lips.*



### Rights sold

Italy (Sperling&Kupfer)  
Portugal (Presença)  
Korea

Offers from Serbia and Romania

**Rui Kodemari** (1956) was born in Okayama Prefecture. In 2005, she received the Shimase Award for Love Stories for *Hoshii no wa, anata dake* (*You're the Only One I Want*). Since then, she has produced numerous romances, which have gained her a steady following. Her fiction works include *Sora to umi no deau basho* (*Where Sky and Ocean Meet*), *Mochizuki seikaten* (*Greengrocer Mochizuki*), *Neko no katachi o shita kōfuku* (*Happiness in the Form of a Cat*), *Kyūshi isshō* (*Nine Lives Make One Life*), *Utsukushii shinzō* (*Beautiful Heart*), and many others. In 2014's *Appuru songu* (*The Apple Song*), she takes on a weightier storyline while still retaining the delicate charm of her established style. She has also published essay collections, including *Aishi no neko Purin* (*My Beloved Cat, Purin*) and *Uddosutokku no mori no hibi* (*Days amid the Trees of Woodstock*). She currently lives in Woodstock, New York.



# SAKI MURAYAMA

## THE MAGIC OF THE MALL



FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2017  
Pages: 452

**Over 110,000 copies sold.**  
**Winner of the 2018 Booksellers award in Japan.**

As rumours of the impending closure of a local department store begin to spread, its employees - the elevator “girl”, the concierge, the jewellery department floor manager - come together with the founder’s family to try to save the store, with the help of a resident white cat.

### Rights sold

Italy (Garzanti)  
Portugal (Presença)  
Korea, Thailand

## THE TALES OF OFUDO



FICTION

Publisher: PHP Institute  
Publication: 2016  
Pages: 382

**Over 55,000 copies sold in Japan.**  
**A book for book-lovers.**

Issei Tsukihara, an introverted young man working for Gingado Bookshop, has a gift for discovering hidden treasures. One day, a shoplifting incident leads to terrible consequences and Issei is held accountable and forced to quit. Heartbroken, he leaves town and visits Sakuranocho, where an old man runs a bookshop called Ofudolives.

The unexpected encounter takes a serendipitous turn. Driven by a “gem” of a book discovered by Issei, his friends, ex-colleagues, and editors all work together to bring about a miracle.

### Rights sold

Italy (Garzanti)  
China, Korea, Thailand

## THE INCREDIBLE NEKOMIMI CAFÈ



FICTION

Publisher: Shogakukan  
Publication: 2023  
Pages: 296

**A 50-something woman and her black cat manage a unique coffee shop where she delights her customers by serving them food, tea, and magic spells.**

One day, Ritsuko finds a helpless black cat on the roadside. She takes the poor thing home and cures it, when suddenly, the cat speaks to Ritsuko. When she was a little girl, Ritsuko had a cat named Melody that died of an illness and the black cat is Melody reincarnated.

Ritsuko has an unusual lamp in her home, given to her by a fortune teller friend who told her that a “genie” lives in it. Half-jokingly, Ritsuko asks the lamp to cure her terrible headache and that is when she meets the lamp’s genie. The genie then tells Ritsuko, “You are to pass away tonight. It cannot be undone.” Ritsuko accepts her fate, but Melody begs the genie to spare Ritsuko’s life in exchange for the cat’s. The genie agrees to spare both of them but on the condition they both become wizards.

Ritsuko summons a giant flying car with her magical abilities, and embarks on a journey with Melody and the genie. They open a magical coffee shop where they can grant people happiness.

### Rights sold

France (Bragelonne)  
Korea

Born in Nagasaki, **Saki Murayama** (1963) made her literary debut with *Small Eri*, which won the Mainichi Children’s Books Award and the 4th HatojuMuku Children’s Books Award. *Magic of the Mall* was nominated for the Booksellers’ Award in 2018.

# NORIKO OONUMA

## MIDNIGHT BAKERY

*Midnight Bakery*, a six book series written by Noriko Onuma, is a delightful blend of mystery, heartwarming moments, and a touch of the supernatural.

Over 1.2 million copies sold.



### FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2012-2018

**A widower, a baker, and a talented but foul-mouthed student work to provide refuge to lost and lonely souls through their magical pastries. But they have secrets too.**

The story unfolds in a quaint bakery that operates exclusively during the midnight hours- from 11pm-5am. This bakery is unlike any other—it caters to a unique clientele of outcasts with special requests and secrets.

There is a mysterious and magical bakery in Sangenjaya, open from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. when it offers refuge to troubled customers. It is a small, odd shop that is run by Kanjiro, the foul-mouthed baker, and owner Kurebayashi Yosuke, who suddenly went from high-flying salaryman to owner and apprentice of this newly started bakery after his wife's sudden death.

One night, a high school student called Nozomi suddenly turns up at The Bakery, claiming to be the younger sister of Kurebayashi's dead wife. Although doubtful, he lets her stay in the shop without questioning.

**This is the start of the numerous incidents that the three of them will find themselves embroiled in as other motley characters come and go in search of the solace that only the bakery and its pastries can provide.**

**Rights sold**  
China, Korea, Taiwan, Russia  
Offers from Italy and France

**Noriko Oonuma** (1975) worked as a scriptwriter before entering the fiction arena by winning the 2005 Botchan Literary Award with *Ringling Out the Old Year and Ringling In the New*. She is one of Japan's up-and-coming writers.

SHIORI OTA

# THE 4 MINUTE 33 SECOND COFFEE SHOP

A coffee shop in Hokkaido that offers you one chance to time-travel and repair the past.

4 Minutes and 33 seconds, the time it takes to make a coffee.



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2023  
Pages: 288

The scent of coffee and the sound of an old clock invite you into this gentle, bittersweet time-travel fantasy. It is rumoured that at Tacet Evening Hall, a coffee shop in Hokkaido, a woman can take people into the past. And there, they can correct their biggest regret. An unsaid word, a wrong decision, a moment of distraction...

Who wouldn't want a chance to correct the past?

They only get one chance, a four-minute and thirty-three-second window while the coffee is brewing.

At the center of the novel is a Himari, a middle schooler who once had a brilliant future as a piano player, until an accident damaged her fingers. She learns that changing the past is not the only way to shape the future and that "If there were a perfectly written musical score for the future, we would probably not play it accordingly".



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2023  
Pages: 352

In volume two, the most important moment is the present one. Using the power of four minutes and thirty-three seconds, which is all she is allowed, Himari saves her friend Tsukiko from an accidental death. But altering the past leads to new victims. In order to repair her own mistake and bring everyone back home, Himari takes her classmate Chitose on a second time-travel trip.

### Rights sold

France (City Editions)  
Germany (Droemer)  
Italy (Garzanti)  
Netherlands (The House of Books)  
Russia (Eksmo)

### EXCERPT

*Ever since Himari Misaki was little, everyone had acknowledged her prodigious piano skills.*

*She'd studied music abroad in England but returned to Hokkaido following an injury. Now, she lives with her divorced mother and younger sister, Nanoka. Coming back and knowing she's failed everyone leaves Himari in a terrible mindset. She begins her first year of middle school a month late because of her recovery, but on her way to her first day there, a middle-aged woman in fancy clothing calls out to her.*

*"Use everyone's sympathy to your advantage. Just smile brightly, and it'll be fine," the woman reassures her.*

*On the way home, the same woman recommends her coffee filled with syrup and milk, and she tries it for the first time in her life. "How strange. It smells like flowers," she muses. It's then she learns about "Tacet Evening Hall", a beautiful coffee shop near the neighboring park, and its shopkeeper known as "the witch".*

*Encouraged, Himari thanks the woman and heads home. "I'll be fine tomorrow, too," she thinks. The next day, Himari searches for the woman, but she finds the woman's whole house has vanished. At that moment, Himari finds the Tacet Evening Hall near the park. "It's really here," she realizes, reading on its door that the café's "Opening Hours End at Sunset". Heavy door, polished wooden walls and floor, a stopped clock, pale dried flowers, and mugs decorating the shelves...*

*"Tacet" had been named after the musical term for a long rest.*

*A man named Kobayashi is in the shop. As he remembers his wife who died eight years ago, he is crushed by regret and guilt. His wife had asked him to buy her flowers for her birthday as they'd passed by a florist, but he'd refused out of embarrassment. His wife had died of an illness before her next birthday. He'd always loved her, he thinks, as he orders a second cup of coffee. The storekeeper prepares a French pressed coffee called "4'33" John Cage". The hot water drips in slowly, and the scent of coffee rises. Each drop of falling water resounds lower and slower. Kobayashi's consciousness fades away like the whirl of an old record set to play.*

*For those four minutes and thirty-three seconds, he time-travels and sees his wife in front of the florist's. "This is the second time you're buying me flowers. The first time was for our first date," she says.*

**Shiori Ota** was born in Sapporo, Hokkaido in 1978. In 2012, she made her debut with *There's a Corpse Buried Under Sakurako's Feet*, which she published on the novel submission website Everystar and won the Excellence Award in the Mystery Category of the Everystar Digital Book Awards.

# MAIKO SEO

## A BLESSING FOR A WEDDING

This heartwarming story about a teenager in an unconventional family situation won the 2019 Booksellers Award.

Over a million copies sold in Japan.



### FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2018  
Pages: 372

Yuko Morimiya has had three fathers and two mothers in her short seventeen years of life, but she is doing just fine, thank you. Yuko rejects the idea she must be damaged because she did not grow up in a typical family; she knows that every adult who cared for her since her birth mother died has loved her and made unique contributions to her development. Yuko is happy, balanced, and resilient despite a complicated upbringing, proof that blood ties are not essential for adults to love a child or provide a stable, healthy home.

When she graduates from university and starts working, she finally finds the man she wants to marry. So why won't Miyamoto (her third father) give his blessing for the wedding?

No matter how hard Yuko and her fiancé try to win him over, Miyamoto is adamantly against the marriage. So Yuko comes up with an ingenious idea: to track down all her relatives and get them to approve of the man she loves. She figures that if everyone else gives their approval, Miyamoto will be forced to as well. She has only one address—that of her previous stepfather—and so that is where her adventure starts. During her search, she learns important lessons about friendship, what makes family, the effect of music on the heart, and all the different ways there are of showing love, especially through food. She also learns the truth about her birth father.

### Rights sold

Italy (E/O)  
Russia (Azbooka-Atticus Publishing)  
US (Europa Editions)  
China, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand,  
Ukraine, Vietnam

Vicki Satlow Literary Agency  
info@vickisatlow.com

Readers of all ages and gender have been charmed by this coming-of-age tale about moving out into the world, finding love and navigating the complications of parent-child relationships.

2021 Japanese film  
directed by Tetsu  
Maeda.



**Maiko Seo** (1974), born in Osaka. Her first novel, *Tamagono Cho* (Egg Cord) won the Botchan Literary Grand Prix in 2001. She won the 2005 EijiY oshikawa Literary Prize in the New Author category with *KofukunaShokutaku* (A Happy Dining Table) and the 2009 JojiTsubota Literary Prize with *TomuraHantenSeishun100 Renpatsu* (Restaurant Tomuraand the Hundred Shots of Youth).

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# DURIAN SUKEGAWA

## DIG OUT THE SUN



FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2024  
Pages: 250

One morning, the sun disappeared. The world has been plunged into chaos. From her home, seventy-year-old Yoshie Tokumaru stared at the city wrapped in night.

Even before the disappearance of the sun, Yoshie's heart had lost its light. Her only son, Kentaro, had died of overwork. Yoshie closed the café that she'd remodeled the first floor of her house for. She didn't want to meet anybody.

Someone knocks on the café door. When Yoshie opens it, there stands a boy. He proclaims he is thirsty, so she lets him in and makes him a cumquat syrup drink. The boy says he has no parents. He doesn't offer a name. He insists he is on a journey to find the sun. Yoshie intends to find his guardians, so together they set out into the dark city.

**Rights sold**  
Finland (Sammakko Publishing)  
Romania (Alice Books)

## SWEET BEAN PASTE



FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2013  
Pages: 239

2015 Japanese drama film directed by Naomi Kawase.

**Rights sold**  
Brazil (Morro Branco)  
Bulgaria (Colibri Publisher)  
Croatia (Hena com)  
Czech Republic (Dobrovsky)  
Estonia (Postimehe Kirjastus)  
Finland (Sammakko Publishing)  
France (Albin Michel)  
Germany (DuMont)  
Hungary (Muvelt Nep Konyvkiado)  
Italy (Einaudi)  
Lebanon (The Arab Cultural Center)  
Poland (Jagiellonian University)  
Portugal (Leya)  
Romania (Alice Books)  
Russia (MTS)  
Serbia (Vulkan Publishing)  
Spain (Chai Editora)  
UK/US (Oneworld Publications)  
China, Indonesia, Korea



## THE CATS OF SHINJUKU

FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2019  
Pages: 250

**Rights sold**  
France (Albin Michel)  
Germany (DuMont)  
Italy (Einaudi)  
Poland (Yumeka)  
Romania (Alice Books)  
Thailand



## THE ISLAND OF PINZA

FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2014  
Pages: 340

**Rights sold**  
France (Albin Michel)  
Germany (DuMont)  
Italy (Einaudi)



## JOHNSON THE CROW

FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2018  
Pages: 259

**Rights sold**  
France (Albin Michel)  
Lebanon (The Arab Cultural Center)



## BUDDHA ON THE WATERSIDE

FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2019  
Pages: 317

**Rights sold**  
Italy (Einaudi)  
UK/US (Oneworld Publications)

Durian Sukegawa studied oriental philosophy at Waseda University, before going on to work as a reporter in Berlin and Cambodia in the early 1990s. He is a director in the Japan P.E.N. Club and Head of the Children's Book Committee. He's also a poet, spoken-word performer, singer-songwriter, public speaker, and television and radio personality.

# NORITAKE SUZUKI

## THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO MAJOR CRISES (Vol. 1 and 2)



### CHILDREN

Publisher: Shogakukan Inc.  
February 2022, 48 pages (Vol. 1)  
November 2023, 48 pages (Vol. 2)

In this illustrated guide, the many possible major crises children face in their daily lives are categorized according to “level of emergency” and “likelihood of occurrence,” from the least urgent crisis to the most serious one. In addition, each occurrence is accompanied by a description of a similar crisis and suggestions on coping. With these books, children will be prepared to overcome whatever obstacle comes your way.

Have you accidentally swallowed bubble solution? Is your pen’s cap nowhere to be found? What to do about an itchy sweater or the endless line at the cashier? Arm yourself with a copy of this book and fear not!

Crises are categorized according to their level of emergency, but a “Major Crises Graph” is also newly introduced in the upper right corner of each page to help readers identify the fundamental nature of the crisis they are facing and more effectively address its repercussions. The graph summarizes a crisis to six major contributing factors: anxiety, pain, frustration, embarrassment, awkwardness, and irritation. Once children realize that each of these factors is a product of their mind, they will not only be able to change how they feel, but also learn to master their fear of being in trouble once and for all.

Over 900,000 copies sold.

The picture book series that took Japan by storm, teaching children easy but effective stress-coping techniques.

**Rights sold**  
Germany (Tokyo Pop)  
Italy (Mondadori)  
Spain (Libros del Zorro Rojo)  
China, Korea



Noritake Suzuki (1975) has won both the Readers’ Prize at the Japan Picture Book Awards and the Shogakukan Children’s Publishing Culture Award. *Daipinchizukan* (*The Illustrated Guide to Major Crises*) was awarded the Miraiya Picture Book Grand Prize, the Picture Book Award Grand Prize and the MOE Picture Booksellers’ Grand Prize.

MIZUKI TSUJIMURA

# THE LONELY CASTLE IN THE MIRROR



Seven teenagers wake in a tranquil neighborhood of Tokyo to find their bedroom mirrors shining. At a single touch, they are pulled from their lonely lives into a wondrous castle filled with winding stairways, watchful portraits, and twinkling chandeliers. In this new sanctuary, they are confronted with a set of clues leading to a hidden room where one of them will be granted a wish. But there's a catch: if they don't leave by five o'clock, they will die. As time passes, a devastating truth emerges: only those brave enough to share their stories will be punished.

A mesmerizing tale about the importance of reaching out, confronting anxiety, and embracing human connection.

FICTION

Publisher: Poplar Publishing  
Publication: 2017  
Pages: 368

*The Chronicles of Narnia*  
meets *The Breakfast Club*

### Rights sold

Brazil (Editora Morro Branco)  
Bulgaria (Peppermill Books)  
France (Editions Milan)  
Germany (Carlsen Verlag)  
Hungary (Kossuth Publishing)  
Italy (DeAn Planeta Libri)  
Poland (We Need YA)  
Russia (Reanimedia)  
Serbia (Vulkan Publishing)  
Spain (Ediciones Urano)  
Turkey (Ithaki Yayinlari)  
UK/US (Transworld Publishers)  
Ukraine (Artbooks)  
China, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam

# SUMMER OF AMBER

What happens to the things we forget when we grow up?



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2021  
Pages: 552

The skeletal remains of a child are found on the grounds of Mirai School, which was once criticized as a cult. Noriko, a lawyer, wonders if the body belongs to a girl she knew. During elementary school she participated in the summer camp at Mirai School, where children lived away from their parents to foster independence, or, like Noriko, because they couldn't do well at school. There Noriko met a girl who said they were "friends forever".

What if the girl had died? The doors open to the memory from 30 years ago, and childhood secrets are revealed.

### Rights sold

Brazil (Morro Branco)  
China (Zhejiang)  
France (Milan)  
Germany (Carlsen)  
Indonesia (PT Gramedia)  
Italy (De Agostini)  
Korea (RH Korea Co)  
Poland (Wydawnictwo)  
Spain (Ediciones Urano)  
Russia (Reanimedia)  
Taiwan (Crown)  
Thailand (WeLearn)  
Turkey (Ithaki Yayinlari)  
UK/US (Transworld)  
Vietnam (Nha Nam)

# TRUE MOTHERS

300,000 copies sold.



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 2018  
Pages: 358

After years of grueling fertility treatments yield no success, Kiyokazu and Satoko Kurihara turn to the plenary adoption system, welcoming a son, Asato, in their home. Six years later, the three have settled into a regular family routine when they receive an unexpected phone call from a woman named Hikari, demanding her child back. Kiyokazu and Satoko decide to meet Hikari, who gave birth at 14 years old.

How can they deny her request?

### Rights sold

Spain (Urano)  
China, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam

Mizuki Tsujimura (1980) made her literary debut in 2004. In 2011 she won the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for New Writers, and in 2012 she won the Naoki Prize for her story collection.

NAHOKO UEHASHI

## KOKUN

# The Woman that Could Hear Scents

**In this high fantasy, a young girl uses her ability to understand scent-based communication between plants and animals to fight widespread food shortages.**



Long ago, a living goddess from another world brought to the Umar Empire a miraculous grain, resistant to all pests and disease. Under the guidance of her successors, who are revered as the Kokun, the empire expanded and prospered by spreading cultivation to new territories. While the grain was far more nourishing than other crops, it became a monoculture wherever it was planted, carrying within it the seeds of a disaster that would manifest generations later.

Aisha is a young woman from a vassal state on the edge of the empire. She is gifted with the ability to intuit what plants and living creatures are experiencing by reading their scent. When Aisha's grandfather falls from power as the state's ruler, Aisha is rescued by Mashu, a government official who sends her to work with the current Kokun, the beautiful Orie. Several years later, swarms of mysterious insects descend upon Umar's grain. Famine looms, threatening the balance of power. Aisha, Orie and Mashu race to uncover the secret of the grain and save their people.



FICTION

Publisher: Bungeishunju

Publication: 2022

Volume One: 440 pages

Volume Two: 464 pages

### Rights sold

France (Actes Sud)  
Italy (E/O)  
Spain (Monogatari Media Editorial)  
UK/US (Europa Editions)

From Japan's greatest fantasy writer – who has proven that the best fantasies don't always involve magic in works including *The Beast Player*, *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*, and *The Deer King* – an ambitious novel which both brings her specialist subjects of biodiversity and the natural world to the fore, while introducing new motifs of scent and agriculture. Uehashi 'takes subjects like "smell", which are difficult to put into words, and renders them in beautiful prose'

The author 'has created a world with incredible precision, including around political and economic systems, landscape and local details', and paints a picture of what happens when people try recklessly to tame the environment, and their hopelessness and inability to do anything when the natural world bares its fangs. This is 'reminiscent of our own arrogance and fragility' and thus highly relevant to people in our own world, facing environmental and economic issues. In addition, this novel doesn't just rely on its protagonist's special abilities, but emphasises the power of people's collective wisdom and creativity in solving problems, and is 'a tale of searching for both light and darkness in all living things, and the light of hope in flexible and changing life cycles.'

**This epic fantasy is both a tale of biodiversity and the coming-of-age story of Aisha, a young girl exiled from her hometown, who has the extraordinary ability to understand the communication between insects and plants using her sense of smell. A wide-ranging story, drawing on allelopathy to depict the workings of ecosystems of which humans are a part, and touching on plague, food shortage, and environmental destruction.**

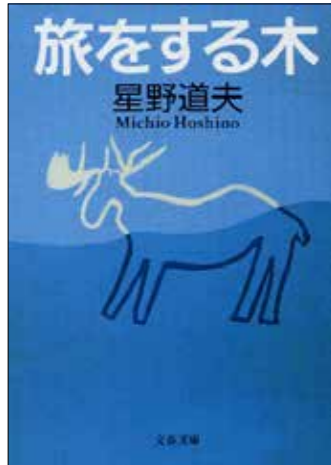
**Nahoko Uehashi** is Japan's most acclaimed Fantasy writer – winner of awards including the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award (2014), the Japan Bookseller's Award, and a Michael L. Printz Award (2020). Her books have sold more than 11.5 million copies in Japan, been made into comics, animated series, a live action television series, and a radio play. Many of her children's works have been translated and published overseas.



## MICHIO HOSHINO

## THE TRAVELLING TREE

First published in 1994, and reprinted 57 times, *The Travelling Tree* by renowned photographer Michio Hoshino is a literary classic of nature writing.



Publisher: Bungeishunju  
Publication: 1994  
Pages: 231

An enduringly popular collection of literary memoirs and photographs of Alaska—its wilderness, wildlife, and peoples—by a naturalist, mystic, and adventurer.

An aerial photograph of the tiny Inupuiak (Eskimo) village, Shishmaref, would change his life forever. After coming across it by chance in a photo collection on the shelf of a used bookstore in Tokyo, Michio Hoshino, then a teenager, was immediately enchanted by this tiny cluster of dwellings on the Arctic Sea. What sort of people lived in such a desolate place, seemingly at the ends of the Earth? The photograph intrigued him so much that he decided to write a letter asking if he could visit the village. Not knowing to whom he should address the letter, he made it out to simply, “Mayor, Shishmaref.” To his surprise, he received a response from an Inupuiak family willing to host him and spent the next summer, at the age of 19, immersed in their way of life.

Each essay is a short mosaic of memory and narrative in which Hoshino ponders universal questions with careful introspection and emotional depth reminiscent of Henry David Thoreau, while braving one of the final frontiers with full acceptance and even reverence for its dangers. His photos of Alaska—taken before global climate change began to ravage its landscape—add vividness to the world his words conjure. *The Travelling Tree* has gained increasing popularity in the more than 20 years since Hoshino’s untimely death. His work has been featured in numerous Japanese television specials and documentaries and an exhibition of his photography has travelled to cities and communities across Japan.

**Rights sold**

Spain (Cantico)

Offer from UK

## EXCERPT

*As I write this, my wife Naoko is pregnant. While I am very happy about this development, it also makes me somewhat anxious. She continues to have intermittent spotting and we’re worried about the possibility of a miscarriage. After consulting with the local doctor, we have decided for the time being to wait and see how her condition progresses. I’ve been involved with the immense wilderness of Alaska for all these years, and now for the first time I’m perplexed by a little slice of nature of my own.*

*About six or seven years ago, I caught my first sighting of a caribou giving birth. This was while I was up north awaiting their spring migration. From our camp, the Arctic Ocean was visible on the edge of the horizon, and although it was the month of May the temperature still felt like minus sixty when the wind blew.*

*One day around twilight, a small herd of caribou descended from the mountains. There must have been 30 to 40 of them in total. They had journeyed over 600 miles from the woodlands of Canada. All were female and most were probably bearing young. While I had been following the caribou for close to a decade, I had yet to witness a birth.*

*Since I could only ever stake out one particular spot in the vast Alaskan Arctic through which the caribou are constantly on the move, my chances of encountering this momentous event were slim.*

*But as I watched through binoculars from my tent, one fell behind the rest of the herd, behaving strangely. In a panic, she kept tumbling to her side and getting back up again. I decided she must be about to give birth. She was too far to photograph and I would have scared her if I’d left the tent, so I stayed where I was, squeezing the binoculars in my fists and hoping anxiously. Her companions, not breaking pace, had already vanished into the distance of the tundra.*

*When the lone caribou stood up suddenly, a small black form flopped out onto the snowy field. Hurriedly I stuffed a camera into my backpack, crawled quietly out of my tent, and made my way on all fours towards them until they were in close view. I believe it was around midnight, but the season of endless day had already arrived and the sun that never sets shone on the white plane. Even bundled up in thick down gear, the burning cold cut through to my skin.*

**Michio Hoshino** (1952-1996) was a photographer and a memoirist, winner of the Anima Award. Born and raised in Ichikawa City, Chiba, his life changed forever by an aerial photograph of the Inupuiak (Eskimo) village, Shishmaref, found by chance in a bookstore in Tokyo. He moved to Alaska at the age of 19, and dedicated his life to photographing and writing. He is best known for his extraordinary photos of polar bears in Alaska.

## SHOUKEI MATSUMOTO

**WORK LIKE A MONK****How to Work Mindfully and Peacefully in the Corporate World****We have seen Japanese books about cleaning and by monks, but never a Monk Business book by a monk featured in Forbes Business magazine!**COVER  
TKPublisher: TBD  
Delivery: 2024

In his new book, *Work Like A Monk*, Shoukei Matsumoto (author of *A Monk's Guide to a Clean House and Mind*) takes his mindful philosophy one step further: from Capitalism towards Cooperation, with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Buddha, also known as “the Great King of Medicine”, is the ultimate doctor who fundamentally cures human beings of suffering. Buddha’s way of preaching, taiki-seppo, focuses on who the listener is and is also phrased as oubyo yoyaku, giving appropriate medicine in accordance with the status of illness. Matsumoto is a leading “corporate monk” who aims to support modern workers and organizations with Buddha’s teachings. His book about “cleaning” has become a bestselling title.

**Rights sold**

Germany (Penguin Random House)  
Italy (Vallardi)  
Portugal (Bertrand)



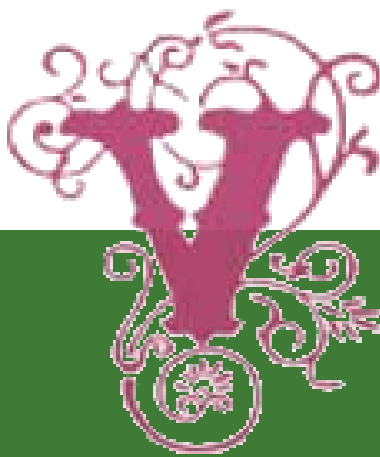
**Shoukei Matsumoto** (1979) is a Contemporary Buddhist, who graduated from the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo. Matsumoto is the World Economic Forum (Davos) Young Global Leader. In 2010, he received his MBA from the Indian Institute of Business (ISB) as a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar. In 2012, he opened the “Future Chief Priest School”, a temple management school.

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