



*Joko IWASE*

*2024 H.C.Andersen Author's Award  
Nominee from Japan*

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illustration © Ueji, Naoko *A New Kid is Here*

# BIOGRAPHY



## Joko IWASE

Born in 1950 in Japan's Yamaguchi Prefecture, she was raised in Iwakuni City, home to a US military base. After high-school graduation, she went to work as a reporter for a local newspaper, while auditing the classes of children's author Imae Yoshitomo. She published her first book, *Asa wa dandan mieteru kuru* (Morning Gradually Appears), in 1977. This was the beginning of a long line of books written from the viewpoint of children and adolescents, portraying the absurdity of society and the unvarnished truth about problems facing modern families. She has written more than sixty books and won many major awards for Japanese children's literature. Her works were chosen for the IBBY Honour List in 1994 and 2016.

# STATEMENT

## The Allure of the Works of Joko IWASE

by Akira NOGAMI, Editor/critic

Joko Iwase was born in Iwakuni, a Japanese town known as home to a large US military base. During Iwase's youth, the town was full of American soldiers on their way to and from the Vietnam War. A pivotal experience for her came at age 19, when she made friends with a soldier about her age heading to Vietnam. Before he left, the young man confessed that he didn't want to die on the battlefield, nor did he want to kill anyone. The last word she had from him was a postcard asking for her prayers because he was being sent to the frontline. Joko subsequently got involved in the anti-war movement, participating in demonstrations and throwing handbills into the Iwakuni base. Her first book, *Asa wa dandan miete kuru* (Morning Gradually Appears (1977)) ❶ reflects her experiences at that time.



❶ *Asa wa dandan miete kuru*  
(Morning Gradually Appears; Rironsha, 1977)

The main character of the story is Nana, a fifteen-year-old girl. Nana smokes and drinks and spends time in an anti-war coffee shop. She is opinionated and provokes the ire of her parents and teachers, constantly rubbing their sensibilities the wrong way. Her values, born of the rebellion of youth that swept through society in the late 1960s, are the antithesis of those of mainstream society. Nana plans an exhibit of her oil paintings at the coffee shop where she hangs out, and is on hand when police come to investigate suspicions that the shop's owners are in possession of lethal weapons. The police interrogate Nana and contact her parents. Her father arrives on the scene and harshly scolds her for her connection to the suspects. Nana is conflicted by her desire for peace and the fierce battle for her own freedom of spirit that she refuses to give up. She mumbles these words to herself, "Even on the sea, black in the night, morning gradually appears." This striking tale of a courageous young woman searching for spiritual freedom in a deceitful world was a pioneering work in Japanese YA literature, and it won the Newcomer Award of the Japanese Association of Writers for Children.

Effects of war are not limited to battlefields. Towns with military bases are full of soldiers fearing for their lives as they are sent off to war. Then there are those returning, their souls deeply wounded by their experiences in battle. *Gaku no naka no machi* (The Town in the Frame (1984)) ❷ is about Naoko, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a Japanese mother and an American soldier who had met when he was assigned to the local military base. Naoko spends her early years in the US, but her parents divorce, and Naoko and her mother return to the town with the base. There her mother gets involved with a long line of boyfriends. One night, she quarrels with a GI she has brought home. In a state of confusion exacerbated



❷ *Gaku no naka no machi* (The Town in the Frame; Shogakukan, 1984)

by homesickness and hatred for military life, the soldier leaves by way of a backstreet where he murders a prostitute, a woman living alone who makes a living off of military men like him. Naoko herself goes off to a cheap hotel with a baby-faced soldier. The GIs and prostitutes in the novel represent the different people living in a base town. They serve as background, as Iwase portrays in heartbreaking detail Naoko's love for her mother and the complicated sensitivities of a girl unable to be either Japanese or American. In this novel, Iwase includes all manner of topics traditionally taboo in young people's literature: drugs, sex, prostitution and abortion.

In the decades that followed, Iwase continued to write sympathetically and seamlessly about young people caught in home environments and a society that have diverged from tradition and become ever more complicated and confusing. In the midst of their trials, Iwase's diverse range of characters are able to think for themselves and take bold steps forward. An author who has expanded the range of children's literature in Japan and serves as a frontrunner, Iwase has received many major awards and been chosen twice for the IBBY Honour List. Her books are popular among young readers and have received critical acclaim.

In *Usu ja nai yo to Tanikawa-kun wa itta* (Tanikawa Said "It's Not a Lie" (1991)) ③, Rui is girl who hardly ever speaks to anyone. Tanikawa is a new student to the school who comes right up to her and demands that she talk to him. Then he tells her that his father is a zoo-ecologist living and working in Brazil and that his mother is there with him. As proof, the boy gives Rui postcards and stamps with pictures of extinct animals, but then goes on to make a habit of borrowing money from her. One day, Rui visits Tanikawa at home and discovers the truth. His mother has run off with a lover, abandoning her two children in a tiny apartment. Tanikawa and his younger sister get by with the money their mother brings them every two weeks and whatever Tanikawa earns at his after-school job in a supermarket. He refuses to criticize his selfish mother, and instead defends her actions. Rui, usually taciturn and uncooperative, goes along with Tanikawa's lie. In their unlikely friendship, the two display the intrinsic kindness of children that transcends the egoism of adults. This book won the Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award and was selected for the IBBY Honour List in 1994.

*Mochotto dake kodomo de iyo* (I'm Going to Stay a Child for a Little Longer (1992)) ④ is a painfully honest depiction of the bitter frustration and pressure children face. Iwase further advocates for the fragile sensibilities of children in *Stegosaurus* (1994) ⑤, using an extinct creature as a symbol of how these sensibilities are dulled and lost when young people are faced with adult society.



③ *Usu ja nai yo to Tanikawa-kun wa itta* (Tanikawa Said "It's Not a Lie"; PHP, 1991)



④ *Mochotto dake kodomo de iyo* (I'm Going to Stay a Child for a Little Longer; Rironsha, 1992)



⑤ *Sutegozaurusu* (Stegosaurus; Magazine House, 1994)



⑥ *Kin-iro no zo* (The Golden Elephant; Kaiseisha, 2001)



⑦ *Tonari no kodomo* (The Child Next Door; Rironsha, 2004)



⑧ *Kakurenbo* (Hide and Seek: Through the Photographs; Fukuinkan Shoten, 2005)



⑨ *Sono nukumori wa kienai* (The Warmth is Still There; Kaiseisha, 2007)



⑩ *SPisu birejji* (Peace Village; Kaiseisha, 2011)

*Kin-iro no zo* (The Golden Elephant (2001)) ⑥ is a book of six short stories. In the title story, twelve-year-old Hana tries to hide her single-fold Asian eyelids, using tiny pieces of tape to make it look like she has the double-folds she yearns for. The taping affects her vision by tugging at the skin around them and making a nearby mountain look golden and shiny. She tells her grandmother what she's seen, but her grandmother's reaction is to rebuke her for making things up. All of the stories in the collection brilliantly portray the sensitivities and inner workings of children's feelings, their cool attitude towards and irritation with oblivious adults, and the subtle disconnect between generations.

*Tonari no kodomo* (The Child Next Door (2004)) ⑦ is a book of seven connected stories about the lives of children one might find anywhere, their acuity contrasting starkly with the adult society around them. Iwase's work clearly expresses her unconditional trust in the capabilities of modern-day children.

*Kakurenbo* (Hide and Seek: Through the Photographs (2005)) ⑧ is a completely different sort of book. Photographs by international photographer Shoji Ueda, winner of France's L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, are accompanied by Iwase's poetic descriptions. Iwase's lines describing the mindscapes of children resonate with objects placed in a natural background and photographed in black and white.

*Sono nukumori wa kienai* (The Warmth is Still There (2007)) ⑨ was translated into Chinese and sold 150,000 copies. Nami, a ten-year-old girl living with her divorced mother, is the main character. Nami's mother ignores her daughter's feelings, projecting her own onto her and meddling in her life. Fed up with her mother's gratuitous assumptions and pushiness, Nami forms an odd friendship with a boy and an elderly woman living in her neighborhood, a friendship that works a gradual change in Nami's feelings. The subtle shift reflects the feelings of readers Nami's age, and for this book Iwase received the Japanese Association of Writers for Children Prize.

*Peace Village* (2011) ⑩ is a work inspired by the author's fervent desire for world peace, one that could have only been written by Iwase, raised and living today in a town dominated by a US military base. In the novel, Kaede's father runs a pub that caters to US servicemen. Kaede's best friend is Kiri, whose father passes out flyers protesting the military presence. Set in a town with a base sending men off to war, Peace Village, a hall with a small cross on its roof, is a place where servicemen, their families and locals come to mingle and relax. Through the eyes of Kaede, we learn about her fellowship with people who come to Peace Village and the complicated feelings of people in a town with a military base. This book confronts its readers with the reality of war.



① *Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii* (Better You Not Know; Bunken Shuppan, 2014)



② *Atarashii ko ga kite* (A New Kid is Here; Iwasaki Shoten, 2014)



③ *Boku ga ototo ni shita koto* (I Shouldn't Have Done That; Rironsha, 2015)



④ *Tomodachi no toki-chan* (My Friend Toki; Froebel-kan, 2017)

*Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii* (Better You Not Know (2014)) ① is about a girl who has finally moved on from school refusal. Back in the classroom, she becomes friends with a new boy who has been transferred from a school where he was bullied. Through the relationship, we can see the pain, struggle and displacement of children who feel caged inside schools. The reader is moved by the efforts of the main characters as they relentlessly press on rather than giving up. For this work, Iwase won the Sankei Children's Book Award.

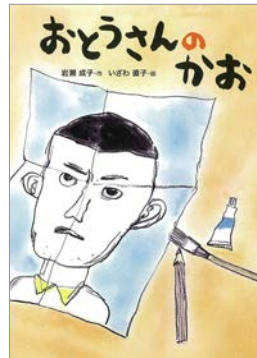
*Atarashii ko ga kite* (A New Kid is Here (2014)) ② is another work of Iwase's chosen for the IBBY Honour List. The story describes in detail the psychology of a child whose family structure is going through a change. The reader is swept into the mind of a young girl who feels replaced by a newborn brother. This novel masterfully expresses adults whose job it is to watch over children and the shrewd skills of observation children have when it comes to these grownups. This book won the Noma Prize for Juvenile Literature.

*Boku ga ototo ni shita koto* (What I Did to My Brother (2015)) ③, *Maru no senaka* (Maru's Back (2016)), and *Haru-kun no iru ie* (The House Where Haru Lives (2017)) are all about the complicated feelings and difficult environments of children in broken homes. The twelve-year-old protagonist of *Boku no ototo* lives with his mother and younger brother. The story focuses on the compulsive violence the boy inflicts on his brother and his ruminations on the state of his family. Iwase gives a close and detailed look at the emotional condition of family members suffering domestic abuse and its consequences. *Maru no senaka* describes in understated tones the tortured existence of an eight-year-old girl whose mother, defeated by the poverty of their existence, frequently suggests they "die together." One day the girl enjoys a glimmer of hope when entrusted with the care of a cat with a reputation for bringing good fortune. Readers of this masterpiece feel both pity and affection for the girl's heroic resolve. *Haru-kun no iru ie* tells the story of a ten-year-old girl, her mother, grandparents and fourteen-year-old cousin—brought together by fate and life's ironies—as they embark on a life together as a new family.

In *Tomodachi no toki-chan* (My Friend Toki (2017)) ④, the perspective of the first-person narrator expands through her relationship with Toki, a friend who does everything more slowly than the other kids in her class. *Mo hitotsu no magari kado* (Another Turn in the Road (2019)) ⑤ is about a character who can't decide what to do with her life, but she thinks for herself and comes up with her own unique solution. *Otosan no kao* (My Father's Face (2020)) ⑥ is a story of a father and daughter who gradually come to understand and appreciate each other. A recent publication by Iwase, *Nemunoki o kiranaide* (Don't Cut Down the Silk Tree



⑬ *Mo hitotsu no magarihado* (Another Turn in the Road; Kodansha, 2019)



⑭ *Otosan no kao* (My Father's Face; KŌsei Shuppansha, 2020)



⑮ *Nemunoki o kiranaide* (Don't Cut Down the Silk Tree; Bunken Shuppan, 2020)



⑯ *Himitsu no inu* (The Secret Dog; Iwasaki Shoten, 2022)

(2020)) ⑰ is about a young boy distressed by matters of life and death for plants and small animals. In these and her other works, Iwase continues to write stories that describe the growth and intricate inner workings of children as they make their way in life.

*Himitsu no inu* (The Secret Dog (2022)) ⑱ is Jōko Iwase's latest work. The main character is an eleven-year-old girl who dresses completely in black. A ten-year-old boy and his mother have recently moved into the same building and they keep a dog, contrary to the rules in their lease. The girl befriends the boy, who constantly worries about getting caught with the dog and having to move out. The girl looks around the neighborhood to see if she can find someone to look after the pet, and in the process encounters a series of mysteries. She sets out to solve them, shrewdly uncovering deception in the adult world. She rebels against the duplicity as she works, but thinks about her own character, too, suspecting that she may have her own self-complacent sense of justice and not more than a little hypocrisy. Iwase's description of the girl's coming of age is accomplished from a unique perspective that transcends mere discord between adults and children.

Jōko Iwase's works are grounded in the convictions of an anti-war peace activist. In a world where poverty and conflict are on the rise, Iwase uses the power of words and literature to fight them. Adolescents are programmed to rebel and have done so since time immemorial. Iwase's books communicate this primal inner cry in a wide range of ways, vividly and almost preemptively portraying the distress and difficulties of modern children. Speaking for them, Iwase painstakingly describes the impatience and irritation youth feel but are unable to express to their parents and siblings, and how they grapple with the instability imposed on them by adults. Mixed in are the images in the minds of her characters. After revealing the problems her characters face, Iwase goes on to cautiously and deliberately pull out the splinters of their existences and attentively heal the wounds they have caused. It is this gentle yet powerful allure in the works of Jōko Iwase that we want to communicate to children throughout the world.

(Translations by Deborah Iwabuchi)



# ESSAY

## Joko Iwase

Most children's and YA book authors tend to be people with an interest in their own childhood or youth. I myself certainly have focused on my own childhood. I've never stopped wondering what it meant for me to be a child.

I remember playing with my friends from sunrise to sunset, but I don't recall my childhood as the best years of my life. While I did have a lot of fun, it has always seemed to me that difficulties somewhat outweighed the happiness, and I've never let go of that perceived discrepancy. Indeed, my impression is that being a child means simultaneously living and being destroyed. . . .

We often hear that, over the past decade or so, relationships between children and adults have changed quite a bit. In the past, there were things adults were supposed to communicate to children, and children were supposed to accept what they were taught. For better or for worse, this thread connecting the two seems to have unraveled. I don't think I'm the only one who feels this way. Whether due to rapid changes in the structure of society or the unstoppable momentum of the media, it is no longer clear where childhood ends and adulthood begins. In the midst of all this, the image of the child has changed. . . .

The society we live in is a mixture of fact and fiction, and the self-images of children take on these often-vague characteristics of imagination and reality. I even see a pronounced emptiness in young people, although this is probably true of everyone living in Japan these days, not just children.

If this then is the case, and one is to write for readers with images of children in mind, and if one is writing conscious of the ever-changing image of children, one must imagine the children who are nurturing these fluid and uncertain self-images, and that is not an easy thing to do.



From "On the Brink of Ruin" by Joko Iwase  
in *Nihon jido bungaku* (Japan Children's Literature) May 1990 edition.

# AWARDS

## 1977 The 11th Newcomer of the Japanese Association of Writers for Children



朝はだんだん見えてくる

*Asa wa dandan miete kuru*

(Morning Gradually Appears)

illus. Cho, Shinta | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1977/2005

## 1992 The 39th Sankei Children's Book Award

## 1992 The 41st Shogakukan Children' Publication Culture Award

## 1994 IBBY Honour List 1994



「うそじゃないよ」と谷川くんはいった

*Uso ja naiyo to Tanikawa-kun wa itta*

(Tanikawa Said "It's Not a Lie")

illus. Ajito, Keiko | Tokyo: PHP | 1991

## 1995 The 17th Robo no Ishi Awards



ステゴザウルス

*Sutegozaurusu* (Stegosaurus)

illus. Arai, Ryoji | Tokyo: magazine House | 1994

迷い鳥とぶ

*Mayoi dori tobu* (Lost Bird Flies)

illus. Yagyu, Machiko | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1994

**2008 The 48th Japanese Association of Writers for Children Prize**



そのぬくもりはきえない

***Sono nukumori wa kienai*** (The Warmth is Still There)

Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2007

**2014 The 52nd Noma Prize for Juvenile Literature  
IBBY Honour List / The 5th JBBY Award**



あたらしい子がきて

***Atarashii ko ga kite*** (A New Kid is Here)

illus. Ueji, Naoko | Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2014

**2015 The 62nd Sankei Children's Book Award**



きみは知らないほうがいい

***Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii*** (Better You Not Know)

illus. Hasegawa, Shuhei | Tokyo: Bunken Shuppan | 2014

**2021 The 36th Tsubota Joji Literature Award**



もうひとつの曲がり角

***Mo hitotsu no magariikado*** (Another Turn in the Road)

Tokyo: Kodansha | 2019

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(Morning Gradually Appears)  
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Watashi neko (I am a Cat)  
| illus. Sano, Yoko | Tokyo:  
Rironsha | 1979



小さな獣たちの冬  
Chiisana kemono tachi no  
fuyu (Winter of Small Beasts)  
| illus. Ajito, Keiko | Tokyo:  
Shogakukan | 1980



アトリエの馬  
Atorie no uma (The Horse at  
a Studio) | illus. Uno, Akira |  
Tokyo: Gakko Tosho | 1981



額の中の街  
Gaku no naka no machi (The  
Town in the Frame) | illus.  
Yagyū, Machiko | Tokyo:  
Rironsha | 1984



あたしをさがして  
Atahi o sagashite (Looking for  
Me) | illus. Iino, Kazuyoshi |  
Tokyo: Rironsha | 1987



ポケットのなかの <エーエン>  
 Poketto no naka no e-en  
 (Eternity in My Pocket) |  
 illus. Yagyu, Machiko | Tokyo:  
 Rironsha | 1988



日曜日の手品師  
 Nichiyobi no tejinashi (A  
 Magician on Sunday) | illus.  
 Iino, Kazuyoshi | Tokyo: Kyoiku  
 Gageki | 1989



「うそじゃないよ」と  
 谷川くんはいった  
 Uso ja nai yo to Tanikawa-kun  
 wa itta (Tanikawa said "It's  
 Not a Lie") | illus. Ajito, Keiko |  
 Tokyo: PHP | 1991



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 Dream) | illus. Hasegawa,  
 Shuhei | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1991



もうちょっとだけ 子どもでいよう  
 Mo chotto dake kodomo de iyo  
 (I'm Going to Stay a Child for a  
 Little Longer) | Tokyo: Rironsha  
 | 1992



子どもたちの森  
 Kodomo tachi no mori  
 (Children's Woods) | illus. Ise,  
 Hideko | Tokyo: Akane Shobo |  
 1993



ステゴザウルス  
 Sutegozaurusu (Stegosaurus)  
 | illus. Ryoji Arai | Tokyo:  
 Magazine House | 1994



迷い鳥とぶ  
 Mayoi dori tobu (Lost Bird  
 Flies) | illus. Yagyu, Machiko |  
 Tokyo: Rironsha | 1994



イタチ帽子  
 Itachi boshi (Weasel Hat)  
 | illus. Cho, Shinta | Tokyo:  
 Bunkeido | 1995



やわらかい扉  
Yawarakai tobira (Door of Tender) | Tokyo: Benesse | 1996



どうぶつふうせん  
Dobutsu fusen (Animal Balloon) | illus. Sasameya, Yuki | Tokyo: Holp Shuppan | 1996



夜くる鳥  
Yoru kuru tori (The Owl Coming at Night) | illus. Ajito, Keiko | Tokyo: PHP | 1997



アルマジロのしっぽ  
Arumajiro no shippo (Armadillo's Tale) | illus. Watanabe, Yoji | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1997



「心」の子ども文学館 5: ダイエットクラブ  
Daietto kurabu (Diet Club) | by many authors | Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center | 1997



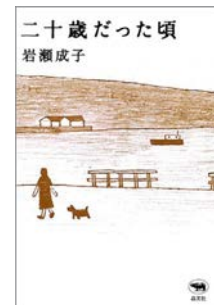
大きい家 小さい足  
Okii ie chiisai ashi (A Big House, Small feet) | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1997



金色の象  
Kin-iro no zo (The Golden Elephant) | illus. Kitami, Yuko | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2001



さらわれる  
Sarawareru (Kidnapped) | illus. Cho, Shinta | Kobe: BL Shuppan | 2002



二十歳だった頃  
Hatachi datta koro (When I was 20 Years Old) | Tokyo: Shobunsha | 2002



月夜の誕生日

Tsukiyo no tanjōbi (Birthday on a Moonlight Night) | illus. Ajito, Keiko | Tokyo: Kinnohoshi-sha | 2004



となりのこども

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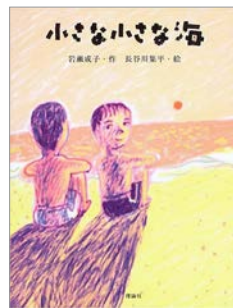
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かくれんぼ

Kakurenbo (Hide and Seek Through the Photographs) | photos: Yeda, Shoji | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2005



小さな小さな海

Chiisana chiisana umi (Tiny Tiny Sea) | illus. Hasegawa, Shuhei | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2005



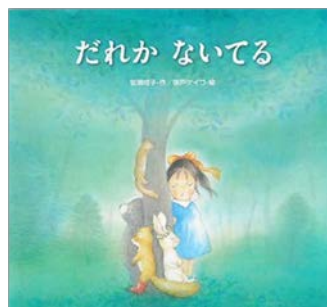
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Sayaka boku wa sakenda (Sayaka, I hailed) | illus. Tashima, Seizo | Tokyo: Kosei Shuppansha | 2007



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だれか ないてる

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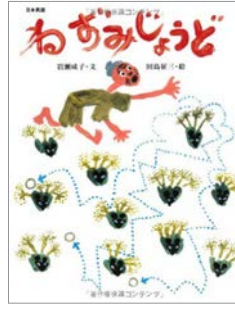


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Shirayuki hime (Snow White)  
| illus. Arai, Ryoji | Kobe:  
Felissimo | 2009



ねずみじょうと : 日本民話  
Nezumi jodo: Nihon minwa  
(Mouse Paradise: Japanese  
Folktale) | illus. Tashima, Seizo  
| Kobe: Felissimo | 2010



オール・マイ・ラヴィング  
Oru mai rabinqu (All My Loving)  
Tokyo: Home-sha | 2010



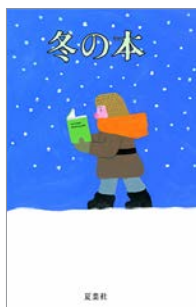
まつりちゃん  
Matsuri-chan (Matsuri-chan) |  
Tokyo: Rironsha | 2010



だれにもいえない  
Darenimo ienai (I Cannot Tell  
Anyone) | illus. Aminaka, Izuru  
| Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha |  
2011



ピース・ヴァイレツジ  
Pisu birejji (Peace Village) |  
Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2011



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Fuyu no hon (Winter Book)  
| by many authors | Tokyo:  
Natsuhasha | 2012



なみだひっこんでろ  
Namida hikkondero (Back Off,  
Tears) | illus. Ueji, Naoko |  
Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2012



子どもの本の海で泳いで  
Kodomo no hon no umi de  
oyoide (Swimming in the Ocean  
of Children's Books) | by many  
authors | illus. Uno, Akira |  
Kobe: BL Shuppan | 2013





とっとこトマちゃん  
Tottoko Toma-chan (Lively  
Toma-chan) | illus. Nakatani,  
Haruhiko | Tokyo: WAVE  
Shuppan | 2013



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is Here) | illus. Ueji, Naoko |  
Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2014



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Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii  
(Better You Not Know) | illus.  
Hasegawa, Shuhei | Tokyo:  
Bunken Shuppan | 2014



くもりときどき晴レル  
Kumori tokidoki hareru (Cloudy  
and Sometimes Sunny) | Tokyo:  
Rironsha | 2014



ともだちってだれのこと?  
Tomodachi tte dare no koto?  
(Who is a Friend?) | illus.  
Nakazawa, Miho | Tokyo: Kosei  
Shuppansha | 2015



100万分の1回のねこ  
Hyakuman bun no ikkai no neko  
(One Millionth Cat) | by many  
authors | illus. Sano, Yoko |  
Tokyo: Kodansha | 2015



ぼくが弟にしたこと  
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Rironsha | 2015



わたしが子どものころ戦争があった  
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War in My Childhood) | by many  
authos | edit. Nogami, Akira |  
Tokyo: Rironsha | 2015



マルの背中  
Maru no senaka (Maru's Back)  
| Tokyo: Kodansha | 2016



あまからすっぱい物語 2  
Amakara suppai monogatari 2  
(Sweet, Spicy and Sour Stories  
2) | by many authors | Tokyo:  
Shogakukan | 2016



オール・マイ・ラヴィング  
Oru mai rabingu (All My Loving)  
Paperback | Tokyo: Shogakukan  
| 2016



ともだちのときちゃん  
Tomodachi no Toki-chan (My  
Friend Toki) | illus. Ueda,  
Makoto | Tokyo: Froebel-kan |  
2017



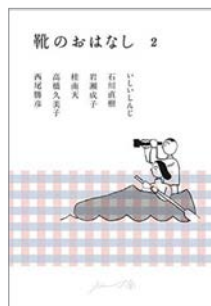
ちょっとおんぶ  
Chotto onbu (Piggyback,  
Please) | illus. Kitami, Yuko |  
Tokyo: Kodansha | 2017



春くんのいる家  
Haru-kun no iru ie (The House  
Where Haru Lives) | illus.  
Tsubotani, Reiko | Tokyo:  
Bunkeido | 2017



地図を広げて  
Chizu o hirogete (Spreading a  
Map) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2018



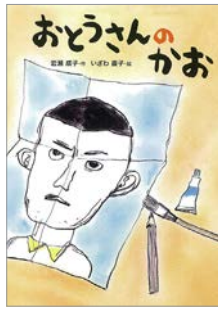
靴のおはなし 2  
Kutsu no ohanashi 2 (Shoes  
Stories 2) | by many authors |  
Nara: Loopsha | 2019



もうひとつの曲がり角  
Mo hitosu no magari kado  
(Another Turn in the Road) |  
Tokyo: Kodansha | 2019



夜明け前のキョフ  
Yoakemae no kyofu (Fears  
Before Dawn) | by many  
authors | illus. Karube, Takehiro  
| edit. JAWC | Tokyo: Froebel-  
kan | 2020



おとうさんのかお  
Otosan no kao (My Father's  
Face) | illus. Izawa, Naoko |  
Tokyo: Kosei Shuppansha |  
2020



ネムノキをきらないで  
Nemunoki o kiranaide (Don't  
Cut Down the Silk Tree) | illus.  
Ueda, Makoto | Tokyo: Bunken  
Shuppan | 2020



わたしのあのこ あのこのわたし  
Watashi no anoko anoko no  
watashi (What She Is to Me,  
What I Am to Her) | Tokyo: PHP  
| 2021



ひみつの犬  
Himitsu no inu (A Secret Dog)  
| illus. Hirano, Toshiyuki |  
Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2022



ジャングルジム  
Jangurujimu (Jungle Gym) |  
illus. Aminaka, Izuru | Tokyo:  
Goblin Shobo | 2022

# TRANSLATIONS



「うそじゃないよ」と谷川くんはいった

*Usa ja naiyo to Tanikawa-kun wa itta* (Tanikawa Said "It's Not a Lie") | PHP | 1991

●**KOREAN** | Miseghy | 2013 | ISBN 9788980713431



金色の象

*Kin-iro no zo* (The Golden Elephant) | Kaiseisha | 2001

●**KOREAN** | MOONWON | 2003 | ISBN 9788986396669



そのぬくもりは きえない

*Sono nukumori wa kienai* (The Warmth is Still There) | Kaiseisha | 2007

●**KOREAN** | Miseghy Children's Press | 2011 | ISBN 9788980712755

●**CHINESE (Simplified)** | New Buds Publishing House | 2013



きみは知らないほうがいい

Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii (Better You Not Know) | Bunken Shuppan | 2014

●KOREAN | 2016 | ISBN 9788980714087



あたらしい子がきて

Atarashii ko ga kite (A New Kid is Here) | Iwasaki Shoten | 2014

●CHINESE (Simplified) | 北京禹田幹風圖書有限公司 | 2021 | ISBN 9787571511661



# 10 Important Titles





## 額の中の街

Gaku no naka no machi

### The Town in the Frame

illus. Yagyu, Machiko | Rironsha | 1984 | 214 pp

14-year-old Naoko's father is an American soldier in Japan, and her mother Yoshiko is Japanese. After Yoshiko gives birth to Naoko, the three of them move to the U.S, where her father jilts her mother. Naoko and her mother fly back to Japan leaving her brother Tim behind. Back in Japan, Yoshiko starts working at a pub in a military town and brings home her new male friends night after night. Naoko seems to accept her mother's life, but eventually begins to show frustration and hatred for George, a young American soldier Yoshiko brings home, and vents her anger at the way Yoshiko works at night, seducing the soldiers. George develops a drug addiction that aggravates his bipolar disease and he ends up killing Yoshiko. Naoko thinks about her mother. "She has worked in this town for years, meeting countless American soldiers and inviting them home for fun. George, Robert, and probably even my father came to know her that way." Now it is Naoko's turn to follow soldiers into dingy hotels in the seedy part of town.

Drug, sex, prostitution, pregnancy, and abortion. The Town in the Frame matter-of-factly deals with themes that have traditionally been taboo in children's literature. Against a background of different characters living in a military town, the story brilliantly captures Naoko's affection for and hatred towards her mother, and depicts her own unsettling fragility born of her inability to be either completely American or Japanese.



## 「うそじゃないよ」と谷川くんはいった

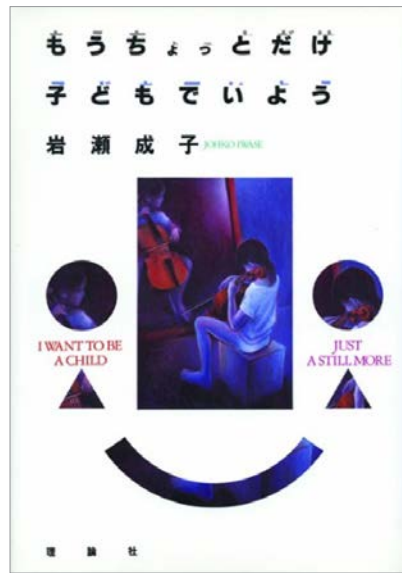
Usso ja naiyo to Tanikawa-kun wa itta

**Tanikawa Said 'It's Not a Lie'**

illus. Ajito, Keiko | PHP | 1991 | 118 pp | ISBN 4-569-58519-1

Rui has selective mutism, which is why she speaks normally at home, but almost never at school. Tanikawa is a new boy at Rui's school. He approaches her and tries to get her to talk to him. Tanikawa tells Rui that his father is a scholar of zoo-ecology and that both of his parents are doing research in Brazil. He brings her stamps from overseas and postcards with pictures of endangered animals. He also frequently borrows money from his new friend. The truth is that Tanikawa's mother has left him and his younger sister and run off with her lover. The two children are living in a shabby apartment, barely making ends meet with the small amount of money their mother sends and Tanikawa's earnings from his after-school job. Children alone, though, can't make it on their own forever, and Tanikawa suddenly stops showing up at school. Through the friendship of this young boy, who defends rather than denounces the neglect of the mother who abandoned him for a lover, and Rui, who goes along with his improbable story, we see the innate kindness of children who manage to transcend adult egoism.





## もうちょっとだけ 子どもでいよう

Mo chotto dake kodomo de iyo

### I'm Going to Stay a Child for a Little Longer

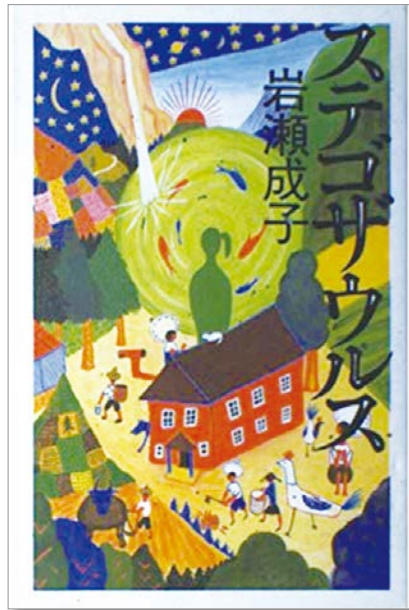
Rironsha | 1992 | 331 pp | ISBN 4-652-04214-0

Saki, age 11, makes friends with Mio, who has had her head shaved for brain surgery. Saki's elder sister Hikaru, about 14, sends letters to a radio DJ, pretending to be the unhappy child of a broken home. Saki and Hikaru's mother is a former junior high school teacher who now tutors children in Japanese and English. Her weakness is getting overinvolved in anything that takes her fancy, and right now she is deeply into religion. The girls' father had, in his younger years, been close to alcoholism, but these days he runs a small company together with a friend. On the surface, the four are the sort of typical family you'd expect to find anywhere, but a closer look into their individual worries and the problems they have remind the reader of what "typical" families these days face. In other words, this story is a universal portrait of modern life.

Hikaru meets some high-school drop-outs in a vacant house on the beach. The youth are continuing their education at a cram school. As for Saki, she comes face-to-face with Mio who was carried into the hospital and totters on the brink of death. The two sisters catch glimpses of modern life through the different adults and young people they come into contact with.

Reading the words of Saki and Hikaru, the reader is struck by the keenly perceptive sensitivities of children, described in a way only Iwase can do. We can see the words as expressions of the ire of children towards the inert sensitivities of adults. The literary power of this work is in how the writer interprets the difficulties of living as a child, and the intention of the writer to bear witness to it. In this book is an inner world that children of the same generation can profoundly empathize with. Iwase's story gives impressionable children, who face similar confusion and dilemmas, relief and courage in the discovery that they are not the only ones who feel isolated and helpless.

Excerpted from an article in *Tobu kyoshitsu* Issue 44, Fall 1992



## ステゴザウルス

Sutegozaurusu

### Stegosaurus

illus. Arai, Ryoji | Magazine House | 1994 | 255 pp | ISBN 4-8387-0513-1

Machiko, age 17, is in high school. Her parents are divorced and she lives in the city with her father. Her sister Aoko, about 11, has gone with her mother to live with a farmer in a country village.

One day, Machiko takes her pet cat to a vet, who tries to molest the girl. Machiko fends him off with her fists and consequently decides to take up muscle training. Meanwhile, Aoko sends her elder sisters letters full of descriptions of life in the village. Among other things, the village is a temporary home to children from urban families who have been sent to experience rural life. Local children call the outsiders "stegosaurus." It makes Aoko think of the picture of a stegosaurus in the book *Dinosaur Time* illustrated by Arnold Lobel, and the nickname thrills her.

Aoko and her city friends run away from the village together and begin a community deep in the mountains in a hideaway they call the House of the Stegosaurus. When the entire village goes looking for the children, Machiko joins the search. She thinks to herself, "If I can somehow make it to the House of the Stegosaurus, I believe it will help get rid of the burning pain in my heart. Maybe I'm just like the children, looking for healing in that house."

Machiko has hardened her heart and armed her body. She rebels against the selfishness of adults and hurts herself. Coming up against the sensibilities of her 11-year-old sister, however, she ends up conspiring with her as a way to heal the "burning pain" in her own heart. 17-year-old Machiko, on the verge of adulthood, is confronted by the obstinance of children filled with inexhaustible reckless energy and discovers how deeply it resonates with her.



## ピース・ヴィレッジ

Pisu birejji

### Peace Village

Kaiseisha | 2011 | 194 pp |

ISBN 978-4-036430901

Kaede's town in Japan is home to a U.S. military base, which even now sends soldiers to war. Kaede is in sixth grade, and her father runs a bar catering to the soldiers. Kaede learns that Kiri, a friend a year older than her, has been giving soldiers anti-war pamphlets that Kiri's father wrote in English. Perhaps because of this, Kaede finds that Kiri avoids her. As the story progresses, Kaede and Kiri interact with people at the Peace Village, a beloved spot in town, and learn stories of their neighbors that alert them to complex realities.

\*\*\*

This is a story about a girl who lives in a town with a base in Okinawa. There are no incidents or exciting stories, just the girl's daily life and thoughts are depicted in a lighthearted manner. I have never lived in a town with a base, but by reading this book, I was able to feel, for a moment, just a little bit like I was in the town with the base.

The book conveys, without being intrusive, the way of life of a "citizen" and what is important. It is a book that quietly, but not loudly, conveys the importance of a peaceful world without war and the necessity of expressing the importance of peace.

At the end of the story, there is a sentence "I had a strange feeling as if I had received a special gift." I, too, felt as if something important had been gently handed to me from this book. I think this kind of book is called "literature" for children. I hope that young people who will be responsible for the future will read this book.



## マルの背中

Maru no senaka

### Maru's Back

illus. Sakai, Komako | Kodansha | 2016 |  
166 pp | ISBN 978-4-062200639

Since Azumi's parents divorced two years ago, her younger brother Rio has lived with her father, while Azumi lives with her mother in a public apartment. Her mother works at the convenience store and another part-time job, but still struggles to pay their rent. She sometimes asks Azumi, "Shall the two of us die together?" When the man who runs the sweet shop has to be away, he entrusts Azumi with his white cat named Maru, who has a circle shape on his back. Azumi, who thinks often of her brother living apart from her, proves a loving caregiver, and it seems as if Maru may bring happiness to her life.



## ともだちのときちゃん

Tomodachi no Toki-chan

### My Friend Toki

illus. Ueda, Makoto | Froebel-kan | 2017 | 72 pp |  
ISBN978-4-577-04574-9

Satsuki, a girl in her second year of elementary school, likes to chat and get things done. Her classmate Toki-chan, on the other hand, often cannot answer questions quickly and takes her time with things. At the request of Toki-chan's mother, Satsuki walks to school with Toki-chan daily and spends lots of time with her. But when Toki-chan moves slowly, Satsuki often grows frustrated, and when Satsuki can't stand to wait anymore, she sometimes goes ahead, thinking to herself, "Surely this isn't mean." At first, Satsuki thinks Toki-chan strange because she can watch a line of ants by the roadside endlessly, and she says things like, "The tree is living, so it's not the same tree it was yesterday." But Satsuki eventually comes to see that because Toki-chan takes her time, she sees and feels things that others cannot. Satsuki's story, which is told in the straightforward words of a seven-year-old, shows how she changes and grows through her friendship with someone who has quite a different personality and way of doing things. The illustrations lend a gentle touch that calms the heart.



## 地図を広げて

Chizu o hirogete

### Spreading Out the Map

Kaiseisha | 2018 | 246 pp | ISBN978-4-03-613180-9

This story of adolescence focuses on the awkwardness of reuniting as a family after four years of living apart and the process of overcoming it.

Twelve-year-old Suzu has been living with her father since he and her mother divorced four years ago. When Suzu's mother suddenly dies, however, Suzu and her father must welcome Kei, Suzu's eight-year-old brother, back into the family after an absence of four years. The story begins with Suzu waiting for her father to bring Kei home. Kei is quiet and polite, but he wants to spend every weekend at their grandmother's on his mother's side. He gets his father to buy him a map of the neighborhood and starts disappearing on his bicycle every day. Worried about him, Suzu follows along. She also begins spending the weekends at their grandmother's. By doing so, she learns that Kei has been visiting the neighborhood they used to live in before their parents divorced, searching for people who might remember him, recording all these places on his map, and looking at photos on his mother's cellphone which their grandmother has kept.

The book's 24 chapters cover the period from mid-May to the end of June. Suzu's memories, which have been awakened by her mother's death and Kei's addition to her family, are inserted throughout, carrying the reader along.

Suzu's father, a newspaper reporter, likes to photograph rivers, and a river runs through the town where they live. The image of characters crossing the top of the dam recurs throughout the tale, symbolizing Suzu's feelings of anxiety and release. Unique supporting characters, such as her father's former classmate Makiko, Suzu's only friend Tsukita, and her mother's high school friend, contribute to Suzu's deepening understanding.



## もうひとつの曲がり角

Mo hitotsu no magarihado

### Another Turn in the Road

illus. Sakai, Komako | Kodansha | 2019 | 256 pp |  
ISBN978-4-06-516880-6

Tomo is a fifth-grader who moves over spring break because her parents have bought an old house. She starts the school year at a new school, and she begrudgingly attends cram school for English conversation, since her mother says it will help her future. Her brother, a new middle schooler who has joined the baseball team, gets rebuked by their mother for poor test grades. He tells Tomo, "At school, students are ranked and forced to compete. I hate it, but there's no way out."

One day when cram school is closed, Tomo walks down a street she has never taken and sees a house with an old sign for a café on the front. In the yard, an old woman is reading something aloud. Mystified, Tomo watches for a moment and finds herself invited in and treated to some recitations. The next week, she decides to skip cram school and go listen some more, but before she reaches the house she encounters a strange girl who performs cartwheels on top of a wall. Tomo thought she had taken the same street and turned at the same T junction, but she gets lost in a different flow of time. She explores the connections between the girl and the old woman.

Tomo ends up quitting the English conversation school, and her brother quits baseball. Their parents do not understand that the things they have been doing for their children's future are in fact burdens for them. Tomo, while uncertain, chooses the turns she will take for her future herself, and when she tells her parents, they reluctantly agree. It is impressive and inspiring to watch this fifth grader think hard and act decisively.

#### This Book won the Tsubota Joji Literature Award 2021

The main character Tomo's problem was a simple one: "I don't want to go to an English conversation school. However, for her, it is a problem so serious that she wanders off into a place beyond time and space.

A mysterious encounter opens a hole in Tomo's daily life. The fresh scenery that flows through it. Tomo's adventures, told with overwhelming power of storyteller, are sure to be an exquisite gift that will shake, tickle, and relax children who have always been in a somewhat closed-off place, regardless of the era.

Jury, Eto MORI, author



## わたしのあの子 あの子のわたし

Watashi no ano ko ano ko no watashi

### What She Is to Me, What I Am to Her

illus. Ueji, Naoko | PHP | 2021 | 208 pp | ISBN978-4-569-78969-9

"I'd like to make friends with Mocchi." Mocchi is quiet, gentle, and kind to everyone. The main character, Aki, writes to Mocchi that she wants to be friends with her when they are in the same class in the fifth grade. Aki does not receive a reply, but from then on, Aki and Mocchi go home together from school and play at Mocchi's house.

One day, Aki takes her record to Mocchi's house to listen to, because unlike Aki, Mocchi has a record player. Unfortunately Mocchi's little brother scratches it. The record was a precious gift from Aki's father, Michio, whom Aki loves even though they do not live together. Various thoughts run through Aki's mind.

Aki, who often speaks without thinking, blames Mocchi for not stopping her brother; and Mocchi, who often struggles to explain her feelings to others, apologizes repeatedly. Aki soon regrets her words and actions, but her friendship with Mocchi grows strained for a while.

This story's scenes are narrated from Aki and Mocchi's alternating points of view. Each girl's way of feeling things, her struggles, the various misunderstandings, and the gradual recovery of a valued friendship are portrayed with care. Using the everyday interactions of two children who have different personalities and families, this book explores how people can interact and get along together and what friendship means.

This book by Iwase Joko, who carefully and realistically expresses these complicated and difficult situations without pretense, will provide heartfelt support and encouragement to children!

Excerpted from *Japanese Children's Books 2022* (JBBY)

# 5 Books Sent to the Jurors







朝はだんだん見えてくる (*Asa wa dandan miete kuru*)

## Morning Gradually Appears

illus. Cho, Shinta

Tokyo: Rironsha | 1977 | 255 pp

ISBN 978-4-652-00529-3



ピース・ヴィレッジ (*Pisu birejji*)

## Peace Village

Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2011 | 194 pp

ISBN 978-4-03-643090-1



あたらしい子がきて (*Atarashii ko ga kite*)

## A New Kid is Here

illus. Ueji, Naoko

Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2014 | 128 pp

ISBN 9784265054916



きみは知らないほうがいい (*Kimi wa shiranai ho ga ii*)

## Better You Not Know

illus. Hasegawa, Shuhei

Tokyo: Bunken Shuppan | 2014 | 184 pp

ISBN 978-4-580-82232-0



ぼくが弟にしたこと (*Boku ga ototo ni shita koto*)

## I Shouldn't Have Done That!

illus. Hasegawa, Shuhei

Tokyo: Rironsha | 2015 | 160 pp

ISBN 978-4-652-20131-2

☆ Full English translation