Ryoji ARAI
2022 H.C. Andersen Illustrator’s Award Nominee from Japan
I draw picture books / And before that I draw pictures / And before that I’m trying to express something / And before that my body moves by itself and my hand moves and starts drawing lines and painting colors / The things I’m trying to say become lines and colors / And I get closer to the things I’m trying to express / And it begins to look something like a picture / And then I want to show it to someone / And it becomes a picture book / And eventually, I wind up doing this over and over / And I think that’s because I want to become a person who makes picture books and makes others happy.
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Ryoji ARAI

Born in 1956 in Japan’s Yamagata Prefecture, the youngest of three children. Even as a child, he loved painting and making things. By the time he was a teenager, he had already begun to think about creating picture books. He majored in design at Nihon University College of Art. After graduation he got a job as an illustrator in the advertising industry. He published his first picture book, MELODY, in 1990. Since then he has published more than sixty picture books and illustrated more than two hundred other children’s books. He has received many honors in Japan and overseas, including the IBBY Honour List and the Bologna Ragazzi Award. His art has been exhibited in more than ten Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) as the artist representing Japan. In 2005, he received the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.
In 2005, Ryoji Arai was the first Japanese to win the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA). Following Maurice Sendak, he was the second illustrator in the world to be so honored. This is what the judges had to say about him:

"[A]n illustrator with a style all of his own: bold, mischievous, and unpredictable. His picture books glow with warmth, playful good humor, and an audacious spontaneity that appeals to children and adults alike. In adventure after adventure, color flows through his hands in an almost musical way. As a medium for conveying stories to children, his art is at once genuine and truly poetic, encouraging children to paint and to tell their own stories."

Arai’s first picture book was published in 1990, and this major international award came about mid-point in his career. He is not the type of artist whose work goes through transformations, and he can be defined as one who “continues singing the same song.” Today, thirty years after his publication debut, we can say that he has been consistent in his attitude towards both his theme and his readers. His expression, however, is like a spiral staircase that looks at ideas from different angles, changes its approach and further evolves. Indeed, the best of his works have been concentrated in the fifteen years since the ALMA.

**Innovation perched on the classics**

Long before his first book was published in 1990, Arai had been a popular illustrator among young people, appearing in a variety of printed media. As early as the 1970s, when he was a teenage art student, Arai was drawn to picture books. That particular decade saw a boom in the genre in Japan, and Arai went to book stores to see excellent picture books from all over the world. The work that got him started on his path was *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown (1910–1952). He felt that Brown’s work embodied the essence of picture books. A full decade before publication, he operated under the radar, passionately absorbing the work of prominent Japanese book illustrators, including Shinta Cho (1927–2005) and Seizo Tashima (1940–), the latter of whom was short-listed for the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2020.
In 1990, just as the Japanese picture-book boom began to wane and needed a breath of fresh air, Arai appeared on the scene. For the first ten years following, however, there were some adults in the Japanese reading movement who claimed that “Ryoji Arai’s picture books are not for children.” When grown-ups declare anything as “not for children,” it is usually because they can’t explain it to children. The truth is that, as the ALMA critique said, Arai’s illustrations are “bold, mischievous, and unpredictable.” They are as free and unconstrained as children, full of extemporaneity. On the other hand, his books originate in text which is intellectually conceived. As a youth, Arai studied the classics, and the plots of his stories do not follow a typical path, with the joy of unfolding plot and continuity kept to a minimum. Each book has the standard thirty-two pages, but in each one he pursues new possibilities in expression and makes new discoveries. One example is **Uchu tamago** (Cosmic Egg (Eastpress 2009))<sup>1</sup>, a live-painting event that was turned into a picture book, a distinctly revolutionary concept. Another is **Kyo wa sora ni maruitsuki** (A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight (Kaiseisha 2016))<sup>2</sup>, a novel sort of visual expression that includes subtle changes of viewpoint.
**Sympathy for children of the age**

Arai’s picture books are full of bright color as well as a sort of rich musicality, a style that is often described as unrestrained. The stories do not make statements aimed at society, but Arai always has society in his sites, interpreting what he sees there at any given time and creating books that act as encouragement to both children and adults living in that era. If one was to describe Arai’s themes in a word, it would have to be “prayer”, or perhaps “hope.” He transcends religious boundaries to find the emotion we humans share as “prayer”, sending out “hope” for life in uncertain times.

The twenty-first century has brought with it an unending line of wars and conflict, not to mention both natural and human-caused disasters that seem to keep us constantly on the brink of collapse. The 9.11 attack in the US, wars in the Middle East, the Tohoku earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster. Then of course, the Covid-19 pandemic that brings us to where we are today. Arai feels a responsibility as a children’s book artist to speak to the children living in this age.

Although he does not deal directly with social issues, Arai’s works are multilayered and there is plenty of room for reader interpretation. Let’s look at *Happi-san* (Mr. Happy (Kaiseisha 2003)) ❸. A boy and girl who live in Brokendown Town set out on a journey to find someone named Happy who will grant them all their wishes. The book is full of bright yellows. The wishes of the boy and girl are not great. On the endpapers and in the beginning of the story, though, are scenes that remind the reader of air raids in Iraq. In *Taiyo orugan* (A Sound of Taiyo-Organ (Arton 2007)) ❹, the main character is the Elephant Bus. The bus encourages riders to get on and off (“Step right up, step right down”) as they please, as it travels on and on, into many different kinds of places. Over each of the whimsically drawn scenes is the same sun playing its organ for all.
Arai depicts the atmosphere of the age, sublimating it into his works to create a universal expression that transcends all eras. *Asa ni natta no de mado o akemasu yo* (It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window (Kaiseisha 2011)) is a book originating in the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami that shook the world of Japanese children’s books to its core. However, even children who didn’t experience and thus have no memory of the disaster can read this book as an expression of new hope. This is the nature of true art.

Arai’s books are not written to relay a specific message, nor do they force on children the conclusions reached by adults. They seek to share the sensibilities of children living in the present who have all breathed the same air, to set them free from suffocating conditions and to talk with them through pictures and words. *Kodomo-tachi wa matteiru* (The Children are Waiting (Akishobo 2020)), was published during the covid-19 pandemic, and it portrays a sense of hope as children wait for something to appear on the horizon.

Picture books are often passed down to be read for fifty or even a hundred years. Arai says that he writes about positive ideas with readers a hundred years in the future in mind. No matter how uncertain the world is—or rather, it’s the uncertainty of the world that demands books that portray and cheer on life in a positive way. “Prayer” and “hope” illustrated in Ryoji Arai’s books transcend the walls between generations. I believe these books can be shared with people throughout the world no matter where they are, all of us sharing the same problems with seemingly no end to them in sight.
For all of the above reasons, JBBY is proud to recommend Ryoji Arai for the Hans Christian Andersen Award as a picture-book author who represents Japan.

(Translations by Deborah Iwabuchi)
In May 2005, Arai Ryoji visited Sweden to attend the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award Ceremony.

When he was still in first grade, there was a time when no matter how hard he tried, Arai could not attend the elementary school even though it was right in front of his home. During that time, as if to prove his presence to his parents and teachers who worried about him, he spent every minute drawing in his sketchbook. Drawing pictures are of course a means of self-expression, but also a way to free oneself and leads to communication with others. This experience in his earliest years may have led directly to the style of creation that Arai continues even today.

The self-expression in Arai’s pictures never ends. Engaging his readers in dialog, his work attempts to create an ever-expanding world and, in that respect, it connects to the concepts of modern art. The creator stimulates the readers’ imaginations and through an interaction between the artwork and text, readers will accept this, turning each page at their own pace, and formulating their own inspired images within themselves. This potential of the picture book as an expression form may in fact lie in its ability to remain an open space where such magic may happen. What is born in such a special space? Certainly not a one-directional “lesson” but something far richer and profound. And could it also not be something more fundamentally radical as well?
Arai’s art blends delicate and beautiful lyricism, easygoing humor, and silly nonsense into a perfect whole. From his first book, the overwhelming freshness and color, the bold and free format, and unconventional designs have drawn in all who are fortunate enough to encounter his work. There are of course people who expect picture books to deliver a clear and resounding message and those people may find his books are unclear in meaning. His being recognized by the Lindgren Memorial Award speaks to the fact that this very popular picture book creator, Ryoji Arai, needs to be rediscovered by readers in Japan and seen from an entirely new perspective.

In Sweden, Arai was interviewed by various media sources. During those interviews, he explained that he was not a typical representative for Japanese picture books, but rather, an outsider in that world. Of course there is no doubt in anyone’s mind that Arai, who has won numerous awards in Japan, is a leading picture book creator more than worthy of representing picture books in Japan. However, his books will not fit neatly into any predefined format for “picture books.” Arai continually seeks out further potentials of this art form as a means of self-expression and it is hardly surprising that he should feel he is neither typical nor mainstream. It is a truth he states simply, without a hint of pride.

What is a picture book? It is a bound volume of papers on which pictures are drawn. That description of its physical format is of course one possible definition. While there is a common size and page count for commercially available picture books, it does not mean something outside this standard format cannot be a picture book. Then, if papers with pictures are bound into a book, can it be called a picture book? That does not necessarily hold true either. However, it is difficult to specify what content defines a picture book. As newer printing technologies are developed, and printed pages are bound into a single volume, people will see that the act of turning the pages of a book differs completely from seeing those same images as individual pages. A book brings to life a rich and profound new world for readers to experience. Artists enthralled by such possibilities have created various styles of picture books.
books to match their tastes. As the picture book form has become firmly established and more volumes are published, people have developed a common awareness of what a picture book should be. However, does this not limit the potential to develop novel forms of expression in picture books? In such an environment, Ryoji Arai starts from the foundation that a picture book is a bound volume of printed pictures. He was near the end of his teens and asking himself, “What turns a bound volume of illustrations into a picture book?”, when he encountered a picture book written by the M.W. Brown and C. Hurd team, and a book by Shinta Cho. Although it was his dream to write a picture book, it took Arai a full 15 years before he would actually publish his first. He was hampered by the enormous issue of how to adapt his own style of expression to the format of a picture book. An issue so great that he could only imagine his book could only arrive in the very far future. So, from his perspective, actual publication came unexpectedly early.

He was apparently so preoccupied in trying to figure out the configuration of pages for his very first book, *Yukkuri to Jojoni* (Slowly Gradually, 1991) ❶, that he minimized the number of colors he used in his pictures. This strategy was a success. The result looked as if paints had been used to reproduce the classic picture book look from the US and Europe where woodblock printing was applied in stages. This color design, together with the page progression was highly effective in appealing to the readers’ senses. It resonated with the motifs of music, dance, and encounters comprising this volume. Personally, I can never forget my wonder when I opened this picture book for the first time. Regardless, Arai felt he’d made some terrible error, saying, “Oh no!” For an entire year after the book was first published, he couldn't even look at this book. Of course, only Arai knows for certain what that “Oh no!” really meant. When I heard of this story from him, I was profoundly struck by the level of his dedication towards picture book creation. When creating a picture book, once the book size and number of pages have been decided, a sample volume is bound using blank white paper in book form. Arai, however, uses a black marker and starts writing text and pictures into that blank sample. This becomes a blueprint for the picture book. The rough drafts are always fabulous. These books are like open plazas, and although no detailed plot development (introduction, development, twist, and conclusion) is apparent, the drawings are so simple that it avoids limiting the images, leaving the story with room and air to grow. And yet, when you start reading that rough copy, it becomes apparent just how well thought out the entire book is.

I suspect that even at this very rough stage of the book, Arai already has a clear image of what each scene comprises. Perhaps in his earliest years, it may have been important to draw concrete and actual images to avoid disrupting those images. Now, Arai can focus on the act of drawing itself. Arai once laughingly said, “I carry the Lascaux cave drawings in my heart.”

The Lascaux paintings were drawn 15,000 years ago in the Paleolithic period. Our human ancestors branched off and drew these paintings on the walls of a cave system stretching out, deep underground. They
created pigments by mixing resin with red clay, charcoal, and blood, and drew dynamic images of animals and people on the boulder cave walls. The point is not so much what the drawings were for, but rather the fact that those ancient people could not fight the urge to draw on those walls.

Arai was probably explaining how he, too, is driven by that same overwhelming compulsion. In his Taiyo-Orugan (A Sound of Taiyo-Organ, 2007), he covered the paper with color and drew lines. You can sense the dynamism, the exact moment when a picture is being born. His is a wild unbridled passion to paint that compulsion into a picture. In the drawing are sentences scribbled in pencil such as, “flowers bloom” “there a dog” “there a park,” all sentences lacking postpositional particles. Living creatures and nonliving objects alike celebrate the fact of their existence. He affirms the entire world by depicting it in a picture. The energy that flows off the page is staggering.

Read Ryoji Arai’s picture books, not only to appreciate the content, but as an experience in itself. These picture books never come to an end. Their impact is not contained within its covers when we close the book; rather, it resonates outward and open to the outside world. It is this that makes us pore over the pages again and again to live the world of its story anew. Just as each and every book is an experience, so, too, is each and every picture. I have seen Arai’s original artwork numerous times, but never once have I seen a drawing that was similar to a former piece. This is because every time you see one of his pictures, it is a brand new experience. Just as now, if all of his work were to be displayed in a single exhibition, a viewer would be overwhelmed once again, to the point of dizziness. In each setting, he changes his art style, but remains true and recognizably Arai. None of his works could ever be created by anyone other than Arai. I can hardly believe my own fortune to have been able to experience this talent, to share an age with someone who creates such artwork with regularity in this manner. I count myself blessed.

(Translations by Sako Ikegami)
INTERVIEW
with Ryoji Arai
Reflecting on the Past Decade

Kyo wa sora ni marui tsuki (A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight, 2016) is not necessarily a follow-up to Asa ni natta node mado o akemasu yo (It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window, 2011), but these two books are clearly closely related.

It’s Morning So I’ ll Open the Window had originally been intended to be a book on scenery, when suddenly, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake struck. After a while, teachers and students from art universities in the Tohoku region asked me if I would be willing to conduct a workshop within the affected areas. In Miyagi Prefecture (the region hit by the earthquake/tsunami), I heard the people say, “Water scares me” or “Night scares me” and thought, “OK. So what if I create a book about a series of mornings, so that night will never come?” I went back and forth between Tokyo and Miyagi many times and wound up creating this book.

As I worked on the pictures for this book, however, I began to think, “We need another book about the night.” Night may be scary, but morning only comes after night and it is part of the whole, of the natural cycle, and that was something I wanted to express.

However, It’s morning so I’ll open the window is not merely a book for those impacted by the earthquake. Although the words and sensations in this book were borrowed from the areas hit by tragedy, I specifically wanted to share them with those outside those areas.

At first, I didn’t think of A Full Moon in the Sky tonight as a sequel to It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window, but as I worked on this book, I realized that was how I thought of it. In the first book, I wanted to express the enormity of nature and
so all of the people are drawn very small. But in the second book, there’s a close-up of a baby’s face. I drew it that way because I wanted to. But it made me realize I wanted to get up close to people in this book. I was creating a rough draft when I realized I had drawn contrasting images for everything.

In *A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight*, I put both the long shot and close-up into a single page spread because I wanted to show getting up close to a person in the way you’d change the shot perspective to a close-up in a video. Just as you might see scenes shot in a documentary film. These pictures were not drawn next to each other on a single sheet of paper, but rather drawn separately and brought together through the printing process. I didn’t even check which images would be printed side-by-side beforehand. If the two images are too perfectly matched, it goes down too smoothly. It is important to leave a little bit of awkwardness, a mismatch. This allows a feel of many people entering the scene, of a passage of time between the left and right images.

In 2012, when Japan was still reeling from the aftermath of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, I published a book titled *Nante iinda boku no sekai* (How Wonderful is My World!) Picture books are often read over multiple generations spanning fifty or even a hundred years. You may laugh, but when you imagine your book being read a hundred or two hundred years from now, you will want it to be positive book. You will want to cheer and sing the praises of those people who are living so hard. I created these books thinking that I want to be on the side that is cheering.

The picture book, *Kyo no boku wa dokomade datte hashireru yo* (I Can Run As Long As I Want Today, 2019), is a title that expresses gratitude towards everything in the world. The world is full of anxiety. Where am I going and how will I get there?” I thought about it and decided to repeat the words, Today, I can run forever, again and again.

When creating a picture book, it’s important to find (not search for) a topic that is not commonly found in picture books. Picasso once said, “I do not seek, I find.” Searching for something is much too broad, whereas finding something is discovering an idea from nearby, from something in your everyday life.

Continuing to write picture books allows me insight, to see, that oh, this is the type of person I am. I can pretend to be better, but the truth is that I am still me. I’m often told, “You’re using yellow again,” or “Oh, a bus again?” but there is strength in thinking and rethinking the same themes over and over and I never get bored. I enjoy looking at the same phenomenon from a different perspective or changing my approach. By not growing bored with myself and keep creating books about the important things, to continue—that, I believe, is what a author’s work is all about.
The Magic of Ryoji Arai

By Kaori EKUNI, Novelist

It’s a recent discovery, but there is such a thing as a Land of Story. I’m not talking about the story world inside a specific book, but rather a place where all stories live, waiting to be told. No matter what type of story you read or write, you will visit that place. It’s all connected.

Arai Ryoji is a proud citizen of that land. That is the only reasonable explanation. When I wrote *Boku no kotori-chan* (My little bird, 1997), I recall feeling astonished to the point of fear when I saw his drawings, When? When did he manage to visit the Land of Story? When did he become friends with my little bird? The plants he’d drawn were all plants that only live in the Land of Story. Their species will only grow inside the soil and climate provided by the Land of Story, so I could tell at a glance that that’s what they were. The foods that he drew are all commonly eaten in the Land of Story. The sky, the breeze, the ports, the ships, even the shops that sell musical instruments are all found only in the Land of Story.

His winter is an accurate depiction of the winter there, and the summer is the summer in Story. The colors of the seasons differ subtly by country, so there is no disguising it—you can’t hide it. How could this possibly be? Arai spends his days in such a faraway land, where he draws his pictures. All those pictures he draws should clearly state their provenance: Made in Story.

*from: The Museum Between the Worlds* (ADD-SYSTEM INCORPORATED, 2007)

(Translations by Sako Ikegami)
AWARDS

1986  The 29th Choice Award: illustration of the year
1990  The Newcomer of ILLUSTRATION

1991  Nominated for the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award (U.S.A.)

ユックリとジョジョニ
Yukkuri to Jojoni (Slowly, Gradually)
Tokyo: Holp Shuppan | 1991

1997  The 46th Shogakukan Children’s Publication Culture Award

うそつきのつき
Usotsuki no tsuki (The Moon Liar) | text: Uchida, Rintaro |
Tokyo: Bunkeido | 1996

1999  The Bologna Ragazzi, Special Award (Italy)

なぞなぞのたび
Nazonazo no tabi (The Riddle Journey) | text: Ishizu, Chihiro |
Tokyo: Froebel-kan | 1998
1999  The 31st Kodansha Publication Culture Award

森の絵本
*Mori no ehon* (A Book about the Woods) | text: Osada, Hiroshi |
Tokyo: Kodansha | 1999

2005  The 3rd Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (Sweden)

スキマの国のポルタ
*Sukima no kuni no Poruta* (Animation: A Country Between the Worlds) | director: Wada, Toshikatsu |
NHK | 2006

2006  The 10th Japan Media Arts Festival, Excellence Award of Animation division

ルフラン ルフラン
*Rufuran rufuran* (Refrain, Refrain)
Tokyo: Petit Grand Publishing | 2005

2006  The 11th Japan Picture Book Award
2008  IBBY Honour List / The 1st JBBY Award

たいようオルガン
Taiyo orugan (A Sound of Taiyo-Organ)

2012  The 59th Sankei Children's Book Award
2012  The 5th MOE Prize

あさになったので まどをあけますよ
Asa ni natta node mado o akemasu yo
(It's Morning So I will Open the Window) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2012

2016  The 22nd Japan Picture Book Award

きょうはそらにまるいつき
Kyo wa sora ni marui tsuki (A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight) |
Kaiseisha | 2016
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Picturebooks, text and illustrations by himself

MELODY
Merodi (Melody) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 1990

わたしおねえちゃん
Watashi wa onechan (I am a Big Sister) | Tokyo: Ask Kodansha | 1990

ユックリとジョジョニ
Yukkuri to jojoni (Slowly, Gradually) | Tokyo: Holp Shuppan | 1991

ぼくの中にあるボクキミスキー
Boku no ehon boku no naka ni iru bokukimisuki (My Picture Book) | Tokyo: Seikatsu Soko | 1992

バスに乗って
Basu ni notte (Waiting for the Bus) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1992

TETO-TETO
Tetoteto (TETO-TETO) | Self Publishing | 1993

ついてくるついてくる
Tsuite kuru tsuite kuru (Follow Me Follw Me) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 1993

はじまりはじめまり
Hajimari hajimari (Opening Opening) | Tokyo: Bronze Publishing | 1994

クルヨ・クルヨ
Kuruyo, kuruyo (Coming Coming) | Tokyo: Hakusensha | 1995
ピッタリーナ
Pittarina (PITTALINA) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 1995

ぼくのいちにち
Boku no ichinichi (My Day) | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1996

スースーとネルネル
Susu to Neruneru (Susu and Neruneru) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1996

ホーラ・イワンコッチャナイの日記
Hora iwankocchanai no nikki (Diary of What You should‟t Say) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 1996

ギタロー アンド アッコ
Gitaro ando akko (Gitaro and Akko) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 1996

そのつもり
Sono tsumori (That’s the Plan) | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1997

みちくさ劇場
Michikusa gekijo (Dilly-Dallying Theatre) | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1999

少々スケッチオブ台湾
Shosho skecchi obu taiwan (Some Sketches in Taiwan) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box | 2000

ぼくのキュトナ
Boku to Kyutona (My Kyutona) | Tokyo: Kodansha | 2001
ぼくがつぼくにちぼくようび
Boku gatsu boku nichi
boku yobi (My day) | Tokyo: Heibonsha | 2001

ぼくときみとトマトとレモン
Boku to kimi to tomato to
remon (You and I and Tomato
and Lemon) | Tokyo: Tom’s Box |
| 2003

はっぴぃさん
Happi-san (Mr. Happy) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2003

にせニセことわざずかん
Nise nise kotowaza zukan (Fake
Proverb Picture Book) | Tokyo:
Nora Shoten | 2004

ぼくとチマチマ
Boku to Chimachima
(Chimachima and I) | Tokyo:
Gakken | 2004

ようかいアニミちゃん
Yokai Animi-chan (Animi the
Ghost) | Tokyo: Kyoiku Gašeki | 2004

おばけのブルブル
Obake no Buruburu (Buruburu
the Ghost) | Tokyo: Kodansha | 2004

きょうというひ
Kyo to iu hi (A day Called
Today) | Kobe: BL Shuppan | 2005

ルフランルフラン
Rufuran rufuran (Refrain,
Refrain) | Tokyo: Petit Grand
Publishing | 2005
Hime-chan (Hime the Girl) | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2008

Uchu tamago (Cosmic Egg) | Tokyo: East Press | 2009

Boku wa boku no e o kakuyo (I Draw My Drawings) | Tokyo: Gakken | 2010

Mokemoke (Mokemoke) | Kobe: Felissimo | 2010

meta (Meta: collection of Works) | Kyoto: Foil | 2010

Asa ni natta node mado o akemasu yo (It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2011


Nante iinda boku no sekai (How Wonderful is My World!) | Tokyo: Shueisha | 2012

Nemuri hime (Sleeping Beauty) | Tokyo: NHK Shuppan | 2012
あのときあれからそれからそれから
Ano toki arekara sorekara sorekara (Then, and then: Tohoku Future Picturebook)
Yamagata: Yamagata Shimbunsha | 2012

ぼくときみとみんなのマーチ
Boku to kimi to minna no machi (March for Me and You and Everyone) | Tokyo: Gakken | 2012

ねんどろん
Nendoron (Nendoron)
Tokyo: Kodansha | 2012

はじまりげんしくん
Hajimari Genshi-kun (Genshi the Biginning) | Tokyo: Gakken | 2013

ぼくの絵本じゃあにぃ

わらうほし
Warau hoshi (Smiling Star) | Tokyo: Gakken | 2014

イノチダモン
Inochidamon (Life) | Kyoto: Foil | 2014

じゅんびはいいかい

こどもる
Kodomoru (Childing) | Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten | 2015
そりゃもういいひだったよ
Sorya mo ii hi datta yo (It was Such a Wonderful Day) | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2016

チロルくんのりんごの木
Chiroru kun no ringo no ki ) Chiroru’s Apple Tree) | Tokyo: NHK Shuppan | 2016

きょうはそらにまるいつき
Kyo wa sora ni marui tsuki (A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2016

ぼくらのエコー
Bokura no eko (Our Echo) | Tokyo: NHK Shuppan | 2017

山のヨーナ
Yama no yona (Yona in the Mountain) | Yamagata: kanabou | 2018

きょうのぼくはどこまでだってはしれるよ
Kyo no boku wa dokomade datte hashireru yo (I Can Run As Long As I Want Today) | Tokyo: NHK Shuppan | 2019

こどもたちはまってている
Kodomo tachi wa matte iru (The Children are Waiting) | Tokyo: Aki Shobo | 2020
Illustration only and other works

サッカー必勝大作戦 50 ポイントレッスン

わたしたちの太陽
Watashi tachi no taiyo (Our Sun) | text: Maekawa, Akira | Tokyo: Taihei Shuppansha | 1987

星座のおいたち
Seiza no oitachi (Biography of Constellation) | text: Maekawa, Akira | Tokyo: Taihei Shuppansha | 1987

宇宙人をさがす
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Chiki chiki chiki chiki ioide isoide (Tick Tick Tick Tick Hurry Hurry) | text: Kadono, Eiko | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1996

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<td>こびとのくつや</td>
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<td>きんのことり 新装版</td>
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<td>ムシャノコウジガワさんの鼻と友情</td>
<td>Ninomiya, Yukiko</td>
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<td>すっぽんぽんのすけ せんとうへいくのまき</td>
<td>Motoshita, Izumi</td>
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<td>Akutagawa, Ryunosuke</td>
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Yukkuri to Jojoni (Slowly, Gradually) | Holp Shuppan | 1991
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●SWEDISH | Alfabeta Bokforlag AB | 2006
●CHINESE (Complex) | 搭公車 | Children’s Publications 青林國際出版股份有限公司 | 2006 | ISBN 9789867249494
●KOREAN | BORIM PRESS | 2007 | ISBN 9788943306342
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- **KOREAN** | Better Books | 2000 | ISBN 9788987811697
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かいくんのおさんぽ

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へびのしっぽ

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- **VIETNAMESE** | in preparation
**Saru no sensei to hebi no kangofu san** (Monkey Doctor and Snake Nurse) | text: Hotaka, Junya | Biliken Shuppan | 1999

- CHINESE (Symplified) | 九州出版社 | 2018 | ISBN 9787510871450
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- CHINESE (Simplified) | Beijing King Ear Images Co., Ltd. | 2012
- KOREAN | BORIM PRESS | 2007 | ISBN 9788943306335

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ぼくはぼくの絵をかくよ
Boku wa boku no eo kaku yo (I Draw My Drawings) | Gakken | 2010

●CHINESE (Simplified) | Qindao Publishing House | in preparation for 2021

あさになってので まどをあけますよ
Asani nattanode mado o akemasu yo (It's Morning So I'll Open the Window) | Kaiseisha | 2011

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Mori no ehon (A Book about the Woods) | text: Osada, Hiroshi | Kodansha | 1999

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空の絵本
Sora no ehon (A Book about the Sky) | text: Osada, Hiroshi | Kodansha | 2011

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●CHINESE (Symplified) | 北京颶風社文化有限公司 | 2016 | ISBN 9787542252159

水の絵本
Mizu no ehon (A Book about the Water) | text: Osada, Hiroshi | Kodansha | 2019

●ENGLISH | Enchanted Lion Books LLC | in preparation
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ねむりひめ

*Nemuri hime* (Sleeping Beauty) | NHK Shuppan | 2012

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- **KOREN** | Neungyule Education, INC. | 2015 | ISBN 9791125307754

はじまりげんしくん

*Hajimari Genshi-kun* (Genshi the Beginning) | Gakken | 2013

- **CHINESE (Simplified)** | Qindao Publishing House | in preparation for 2021

さよなら宇宙人

*Sayonara uchujin* (Bye-bye Alien) | text: Takashina, Masanobu | Froebel-kan | 2014

- **KOREN** | Sigong Jr. | 2018 | ISBN 9788952786494
- **VIETNAMESE** | Ngoại Hành Tinh | Dinhti Books | 2019 | ISBN 9789352123471?
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*Doshita doshita* (What What What?) | text: Tendo, Arata | Shueisha | 2014

- **ENGLISH** | Enchanted Lion Books | 2017 | ISBN 9781592702374
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じゅんびはいいかい
_Junbi wa iikai_ (Are You Okay?) | Gakken | 2015
●CHINESE (Symplified) | Qindao Publishing House | in preparation for 2021
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そりゃあもう いいひだったよ
_Sorry mo ii hi datta yo_ (It was Such a Wonderful Day) | Shogakukan | 2016
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きょうはそらにまるいつき
_Kyo wa sora ni marui tsuki_ (A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight) | Kaiseisha | 2016
●KOREAN | SHIGONGSA | 2020 | ISBN 788952742711
●CHINESE (Complex) | 今天的月亮好圓 | Yuan-Liou Publishing 遠流出版事業股份有限公司 | 2018 | ISBN 9789573282280
8 Important Titles
A little boy with a huge bag walks along a desolate road and reaches a bus stop in the middle of a desert. But no matter how long he waits, the bus won’t come. When he turns on the radio, it plays a strange rhythm: Rum pum Rumpity Pump Dum Dum Putum. A truck, a horse, and a bicycle pass by, but never the bus. Eventually, darkness falls and then, it is the next day. The bus finally does appear. But it is full. The boy gives up trying to board the bus and continues his travels on foot.

Although the title of this book is Taking a bus, the boy never does get to ride the bus.

**REVIEW**

*Excerpted from Ryoji Arai’s My picture book journey (NHK Publishing, Inc).*

This story is similar to an on-the-road movie where a small portion of the trip was snipped off for display. I’m often asked, “Why doesn’t the boy get on the bus?” If the boy waits at the bus station a little longer, the next bus might have room for him. (omitted)

Most people believe that it’s a good thing to reach your destination as quickly as possible, but I don’t necessarily believe that’s true. This boy has been traveling for a long time and he’ll probably continue to travel. He chooses to travel slowly, on foot, and although he may not arrive at his destination as quickly, it gives him time to experience and savor many things during his long journey.

*Excerpted from The Picture Books of Ryoji Arai-A Wonder in Self-expression by Chizuru Miyauchi (Former curator at Fukuyama Museum of Art).*

Arai expresses so many things, the atmosphere, the character’s countenance, his feelings, the rhythms, his emotions, all through the skillful use of colors. Images that leave impressions of color become even brighter and clearer due to the composition of each page. Arai uses these page compositions to further instill the images into the readers’ consciousness using a rhyming text in perfect cadence.

Taking a bus makes skillful use of pictures, both with and without a horizon to give balance and contrast to the entire picture book. This story of a protagonist who remains motionless and just waits is given movement by the reader who turns the pages. The reader’s movements allows a truck, or a horse, people on a bicycle or motorcycle to arrive on the scene. Through this unusual technique, the story moves along, despite no movement at all by the protagonist.

(Translations by Sako Ikegami)
In the dark of night, the stage curtain Opening flies in. As the curtain rises, Opening announces “Opening! Opening!” and the storytelling starts. With each rise of the curtain, the scene changes—the narrator painting a picture with their five-year-old self; skillfully playing a mandolin; swimming; or about to be trod on by a cat. Finally, when Opening Opening says “The End, The End,” dawn arrives, and Opening Opening flies off into the distance.

REVIEW
Not Christmas, not New Year’s, Today is a new day. A girl sets out in the snow and builds little houses just the right size for candles. Intent at her task, she makes one after another after another, then lights all the candles and prays. “Don’t listen, don’t listen.”

An unnamed day, an unnamed girl, a sentence without a subject. Without any tricks or loud messaging, this unassuming picture book touches the heart like a child’s prayer. Candle flames are typically fleeting, but these endure in the mind. Wherever you are, make the most of each day with what you have, and hope as much as you like. This picture book quietly conveys the beauty of living in the moment.

HIROMATSU Yukiko, Picture Book Researcher/
Yomiuri Shimbun Book Review

(Translations by Holly Tompson)
The characters in this story are a boy, a girl, and Mr. Happy.

Mr. Happy is the go-to person when you need help or there’s a wish you’d like granted. The boy and girl climb a mountain hoping to meet Mr. Happy and ask him for a wish. The boy is a terrible slowpoke and it takes him ages to get anything done, so he wants to make a wish to become quicker. The girl is always flustered and panicky, and wants to become calm and collected.

But Mr. Happy takes his time showing up.

As they talk to each other, the boy and girl make some discoveries. The boy says to the girl, “I think you get flustered because you’re always trying too hard to do the best you possibly can.” The girl tells the boy, “I think it takes you longer than most to get things done because you’re always so careful about doing a good job.”

In the end, although neither of them actually meet Mr. Happy, they both wind up feeling as if they had.

**Author’s Comment**


This story is set in a wasteland. When people think of “picture books” most imagine fluffy rose-colored fairy tales and fantasies, or lovely worlds where everyone is 100% happy and satisfied. (omitted)

Although this is a picture book, that doesn’t necessarily mean the story has to be set in a fairyland or fantasy-like world.

In this story, despite the protagonists living in a desolate land, I wanted to portray that despite their environment, these children are living with hope.

When I wrote this story, I was still struggling with my distress over the 9.11. attacks and the subsequent War on Terror that occurred soon after 9.11. Every day, newspapers and TV programs reported the situation in the refugee camps. They told of the children living in this terrible environment. Those images were stuck in my head. I was just an ordinary person and the images wouldn’t let me be. What was life like for those children who lived right in the middle of a borderland? This question bothered me no end.

I was sure they were thinking things like, “I wish Papa would hurry home from the war,” or “I wish I could take a proper bath,” or “I wish I could eat until my belly was full.”

If I had been in a difficult situation such as theirs, where would I find the hope to keep going? I came to the conclusion that the most
comforting thing for someone in their position would be to know that there was someone nearby who was thinking the same sort of things they were. If they could meet someone like that, they could say to each other, "What?! You, too?!" and gain a little hope.

That is why I wanted to create this story. (omitted)

If you look around, all you may see are the differences. People with different-colored hair with different-colored eyes. Eating meals that are so different from yours—there's no end to the diversity. But we're all human and in that sense, we are all the same.

For people to remain living together on this planet, there has to be something everyone shares in common throughout the world. And I believe the hope to be granted a wish is a one of those commonalities. Even coming from different cultures or politics or economics or living environments, everyone shares a desire to be granted a wish. In this picture book, that is what I wanted to depict, a motif common to all who live through a difficult age like ours.

(Translations by Sako Ikegami)

こどもたちは まっている
Kodomotachi wa matte iru
The Children are Waiting
Aki Shobo | 2020 | 32 pp | ISBN 978-4-7505-1598-4

REVIEW

In this picture book, children are waiting. For summer, for the rain to end, for a camel. But who are the children? Adults will recall their child selves. This book has the feeling of one's past and being somewhere in "the world." We recall a time when the boundary between the world and self was unclear.

Even having never waited for a camel, we can imagine children waiting for a camel. We are connected to our young selves. Children are the world. There's no other way to put it.

The seasons, the oceans, sunflowers—they don't exist alone, yet when they are within sight, we're aware of ourselves perceiving them. For children, clashing with the world, or feeling surprise, those moments form core emotions. Children respond to the world with sensitivity, thus forming the self. The world's beauty and all its surprises shape a child. Those sensations can be felt even by adults who read this book.

Saihate Tahi, Author
Asahi Shimbun Book Review
(Translations by Holly Tompson)
Arai did a “live painting” on a single canvas. Photographs were taken of the piece at different stages throughout the performance and then printed up. The artist then added drawings to these pages to create a picture book. The canvas begins with a yellow egg created by Arai stretching out his arm as far as it will go to create a huge circle. It continues as a sort of word association game, using “cosmos” and “egg” as the key words. The picture evolves on and on, into new shapes with different colors. In the middle of the book, Arai becomes an “embedded” part of his own art.
"Simply spectacular...Osada’s sensory text is written in a satisfyingly economical and precise manner: “Setting, the light turns everything golden. Stilling, the water shines silver.” Sprinkled throughout the text is punchy, onomatopoeic language, such as “boom, bah-bah-BOOM!” for thunder. Arai’s lush, atmospheric landscape art is remarkably textured, with what appear to be scratches in the art for the driving rain. Appropriately, the palette is the star of the show; readers see every mood of Mother Nature and her corresponding colors: all shades of green imaginable; warm pastel shades of light filling the sky; vivid, golden, post-rain hues."

-STARRED REVIEW, Kirkus

Mindfulness, spectacle and awe emanate from every page of this breathtaking collaboration. Arai’s forceful use of color and line tell as much of the story as Osada’s punctuation-less text loaded with illuminating figurative language. Kudos to David Boyd, who translated this 2011 picture book from the Japanese, for text that sounds as melodic as Osada’s original poetry must be. All three contributors express a respect for nature’s strength, resilience and beauty. Rain or shine, Every Color of Light is a cleansing breath of fresh air.

-STARRED REVIEW, Shelf Awareness
In a strong translation by Boyd, a Japanese team captures the magic of a summer rainstorm. Working in thick, dense strokes, Arai (What What What?) creates a lake surrounded by foliage whose colors range from spring green to spruce blue. Silver streaks show the first drops: “Look, it’s raining.” The rain falls harder (“Wetter/ And wetter”), and the greenery, the late poet Osada observes, changes: “The blues darken/ And so do the greens.” Wind whips, leaves fly, rain slashes sideways; bolts of lightning flash across the spreads amid sodden blossoms; and thunder follows, “Cracking/ Crashing.” After a few final flashes in the distance, the sky clears, and the storm is shown to have been ephemeral: “Look, no more rain.” The sun sets, dusk falls, the stars emerge (“Shining,/ They share their stories”). By employing landscapes in lieu of human or animal characters, Osada and Arai ask readers to look—really look—at the rain, the way the changing weather transforms the visible spectrum, and the magnificence of the night sky, phenomena all too often unseen in a hurry-up world. The result is a story that sharpens the senses and quiets the soul.

-STARRED REVIEW, Publishers Weekly

A changing sky over the course of a day is vividly portrayed. Dawn breaks and the sun climbs, then before long, dusk arrives to usher in the night. The flow of time is constant, yet the sky is ever-changing in a single day. The book opens to a quiet nature scene where little seems to be happening. But rain, wind and a storm follow, and seeing the vast sky shift becomes an ever more moving experience until you find relief in a clear sky.

No matter how many times you re-read, you’ll respond to the story’s single day anew. Such an experience is quite rare with picture books.

ISOZAKI Sonoko, Editor-in-Chief, Ehon Navi
Creator Comments

“Dawn breaks, noon arrives, then mid-afternoon, late afternoon, evening, sunset, darkness, midnight—a day proceeds. Rather than a boring day, it’s an absolutely precious single day to be considered a daily wonder, as each irreplaceable day is a commonplace miracle, something that was made clear to me in March of this year (2011)—when the devastating Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck the Tōhoku coast—and each day following. Plip. With a single drop, rainfall begins—I wanted to create a picture book of such ordinary marvels, and I would be pleased if, by reading this book, people surrender to these common, everyday wonders.”

OSADA, Hiroshi

“With Nagata Hiromu’s picture book, I created the illustrations from the language, the sense of anticipation, and the emotions that arose. Willing a tree into a tree, and then a forest. Willing a sky into sky, then the atmosphere. I hope the sound of Nagata’s words blending into the world of my illustrations can be heard by readers. That this book was published during the 2011 year of the Tōhoku earthquake and the nuclear power plant disasters holds great significance for me.”

ARAI, Ryōji

(Translations by Holly Tompson)
REVIEW
By Akira ONO, Editor and Book Cover Designer
Excerpted from Tokyojin no. 422, March 2020 Issue

This new work by Ryoji Arai not only captures themes he has been exploring for all the years of his long career but also explores a new frontier in the familiar. “I,” the protagonist, has a clear reason to go to the destination on the back of a horse. In his previous works, protagonists’ reasons for going to “the far away place” (one of the recurring key themes appearing in Arai’s work) were often vague, and even when their reasons were clear, they rarely actually reached their destination at the end. In this work, however, both the journey’s purpose and destination are clear. In previous works, protagonists have walked, run, or ridden the bus; here, for the first time, a horse is the mode of transportation. I want to examine how Arai’s worldview has been explored and revised in this picture book by examining several excerpted pages from the work.
Pages 4-5

As always, Sunrise and I run
As always
As always

Here is another of Arai’s hallmarks: conjunctive “and” and repetition of words. “And” bridges two things. “And” brings two things together and shows the relational association between these two things. They are not side by side; the relationship is interpenetrative in its nature.

Repetition of phrases is perhaps one of the most important elements in Arai’s work. If I were to categorize these repetitions, they would be categorized into two kinds: refrains, such as the ones that appear on this page, and redundant words, like “tiny tiny,” which appears later on. Arai’s refrains aren’t just repetitions of the same word: each repetition adds a new layer of emotion. His refrains aren’t intended to emphasize certain ideas but to elicit an unfolding of new emotion. Redundantly repeated words, by contrast, contain different feelings: “tiny (descriptive) is tiny (image).” If there is only one “tiny,” the focus lies on the size rather than the feeling of awe at how tiny something is. When reading Arai’s works, you need to grasp the sensory image that his “I” sentence structure captures. To convey that image, what seems like a redundant repetition of the same word becomes of utmost importance.
A sudden change in place is another hallmark trait of Arai's work and can be traced back to his debut book. Usually, protagonists are either added or foiled. Here, a girl wants to go to a big town by herself because she wants to sell dolls she has made.

Let’s go, Sunrise! I’m going! As always, as always!

"I’m going!" Such a fitting emotion that captures nervousness and excitement. This scene is full of different sounds: sounds from everyday life, nature, music, and song. As a reader, I can almost hear all these sounds through the illustration.

I will run as long as I can today! We can run as far as we want!

The main character, with a torch raised high, rides Sunrise standing up as he lights the wishes and desires of the people around him. Watching him are all the characters that appeared as new pages brought sudden changes of place: a girl with a doll shop, a donkey bus that brought audiences to the hall, a girl playing an organ, a shepherd boy who plays harmonica, an old woman observing the festival from far away, and the firework makers who made the fireworks for the festival. They all celebrate the festival in their own way.

Congratulations, everyone! Congratulations, world! We can run as far as we can! Sunrise and I! You and I!

There is no longer a limit in the form of “today” – now “I” can “run as far as I can!”

(Translations by Mariko Nagai)
5 Books Sent to the Jurors
Slowly, Gradually

ARAI Ryoji

Holp Shuppan

I am Slowly.
I live in a forest.

He is a good singer.
(I play the accordion.)

I am Gradually.
I live in a city.

I am Gradually.
I love to dance.
Slowly
Plays the accordion.
*Buba Torirori*...

Gradually
Dances.
*Spin spin*

Slowly comes out of the forest
Playing the accordion.
*Buba Torirori
*Buba Torirori

Gradually dances away
From the town.
*Spin spin
*Spin spin
Before they know it.
Slowly and Gradually
Are dancing
Together.

They have danced
Into a strange town.
Fireworks light up the sky.

Townspeople welcome
Them kindly.

Their hearts pound.

Their hearts pound.
Their hearts pound.

*Buba Torirori*

(Her name is Gradually.)
They have moved
On from the town.
Slowly and Gradually dance.
There are only of them in the world.

*Buba Torirori*
*Spin spin*
Buba Torirori

Slowly notices that He is all alone.
(Where has everyone gone? Where has she gone?)

It is dark already.
Slowly decides to go home in the forest.
(I wonder if I’ll see her again. I hope I’ll see her again.)

Gradually notices that She is all alone.
It is dark already.
Gradually decides to go home in the town.
(I wonder if I’ll see him again. I hope I’ll see him again.)

Night arrives in Slowly’s forest.

Night arrives in Gradually’s town.
Slowly feels that his music
Sounds much better now.

Gradually feels like she dances
Much better now.

Slowly, gradually,
Tomorrow will come.

Translations by Mariko Naïai
One day, a white elephant comes to visit a wealthy factory owner named Otber. At first, Otber and the farmers are afraid of the elephant, but the wily Otber soon realizes, "He can make me money. Let him work for us, or we can sell him off to a circus!" and Otber fools the elephant into working at his factory. In the beginning, the elephant enjoys his job, but after being overworked and starved, he gradually loses the ability to even move anymore. The moon advises the white elephant to write a letter to his fellow elephants. The moon's messenger boy delivers the white elephant's letter to the other elephants who march to Otber's factory to stomp Otber and free the emaciated white elephant.

This is a children's story that was published by Kenji Miyazawa in 1926. It is a familiar classic that is often included in Japanese textbooks for elementary or junior high school students.
Arai encountered the picture book that would change his life forever when he was 19 years old. It was an American picture book written in the 1940s titled Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Clement Hurd (1947). In that picture book, the words, “good night” are repeated many times along with several drawings, allowing the free imagery within to expand. It was in this development of images that Arai discovered the art of self-expression. Since that time, he has managed to transform the words that bubble up from within, making them visible to all in the form of pictures.

Otber and The Elephant is an extension of the innovative elation that Arai experienced when he first read Goodnight Moon. Arai listens closely to each and every one of Kenji Miyazawa’s words and quietly instills their atmosphere into each and every picture he draws. The pure-hearted white elephant does not think to suspect the cunning Otber of duplicity. When Otber gives a watch and chain to the guileless white elephant, you have a premonition of coming tragedy, and the scene where the white elephant rests itself is full of calamitous foreboding. The most overwhelming scene is where the artist shows the exhausted elephant’s image reflected in Otber’s eyes. This accentuates
Otber's immorality. In the scene where the dying white elephant sheds tears, the tears appear to be droplets from the skies expressing the pain and sadness that overwhelms the poor elephant. The facial contours of the emaciated white elephant have shrunk to a triangle, and the scars from the chains on his front legs emphasize the desolation of his horrible life.

Arai's pictures invoke within the reader a proliferation of verbal images free of all extraneous thought, entering our souls without a trace of artifice.
たいようオルガン

Taiyo orugan
A Sound of Taiyo-Organ

(First published in 2007, Arton)
A Sound of Taiyo-Organ

ARAI Ryoji

Kaiseisha

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
Sun plays the organ.
Here comes the morning.
The Elephant Bus drives through a narrow road, a narrow road.
Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
The Elephant Bus drives over uneven road.
The Elephant Bus says Good Morning.
What a wind, look at the grass and flowers and butterflies and birds.

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
The Elephant Bus drives. Look, look, vegetable fields, cows, even goats.
All these vegetables, all these fruits. Anyone want to ride the bus?
Raise your hand!
Step right up, step right down, the Elephant Bus drives on.

The Elephant Bus drives over a bridge.
The Elephant Bus is now crossing the bridge!
Oh no, rain!

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
Sun plays the organ.
Look, clouds in the sky,
dark clouds in the sky.
The Elephant Bus drives on.
Look, a small house, a big house,
houses everywhere.
Anyone want to ride the bus?
Raise your hand!
Step right up, step right down!

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
Listen to the sound of the Taiyo-Organ
even on a cloudy day.
Big town, wide streets.
Buildings building, buildings everywhere,
cars everywhere, people everywhere.
Step right up, step right down, the
Elephant Bus drives on.

The Elephant Bus is now
crossing the bridge!
Oh no, rain!
The Elephant Bus crosses a loooong bridge. 
It’s raining hard, with occasional thunder.

Rain stops. 
The sound of Taiyo-Organ again. 
La la la Taiyo-Organ. 
Anyone want to ride the bus? 
Raise your hand! 
Step right up, step right down, 
the Elephant Bus drives on.

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ 
The sound of the organ is now louder. 
The sea smell, fish smell, salty taste. 
Anyone want to ride the bus? 
Raise your hand! 
Step right up, step right down, 
the Elephant Bus drives on.
The Elephant Bus will ride a boat.
Thanks for the tea!

Taiyo-Organ Taiyo-Organ
Lots of sand, lots and lots of sand.
Step right up, step right down,
the Elephant Bus drives on.

The Elephant Bus enters the tunnel.
Tsuki-Organ Taiyo-Organ
Gradually, the Sun sets. Taiyo-Organ.
Step right up, step right down,
the Elephant Bus drives on.

The Elephant Bus now stops
in the middle of the bridge.
Taiyo-Organ Tsuki-Organ

Tsuki-Organ Moon-Organ
Quiet, silent Moon-Organ.
Step right up, step right down,
the Elephant Bus drives on.

Step right up, step right down,
the Elephant Bus drives on.

Step right up, step right down!

[end]

(Translations by Mariko Nagai)
あさになったので まどをあけますよ
Asa ni nattanode mado o akemasu yo
It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window
Kaiseisha | 2011 | 32 pp | ISBN 978-4-03-232380-1
Mountains are still there. Trees are still here. That’s why I love it here.
It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window

The city is bustling as always. Everyone is in a hurry as always. That’s why I love it here.
It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window

Is it sunny where you are?

The river is still flowing. Fish must still be jumping. That’s why we love it here.
Today, I sit under my favorite tree. There's always a cool breeze here. That's why I love it here.

Though the sun is out, it's raining here. That's why I love it here.

It's Morning So I'll Open the Window

Today, I sit under my favorite tree. There's always a cool breeze here. That's why I love it here.
Is it sunny where you are?

The sea is right in front of me.
The sky is still here.
That’s why I love it here.

It’s Morning So I’ll Open the Window
So I’ll Open the Window

It’s Morning

(Translations by Mariko Naṣai)
きょうは そらに まるいつき

Kyo wa sora ni marui tsuki

A Full Moon in the Sky Tonight

Kaiseisha | 2016 | 32 pp | ISBN 978-4-03-232450-1
Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

A baby is looking up at the sky.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.
A boy is on the bus
On his way home
after buying a pair of new sneakers.
Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

Bears are on their way back home
after a full day of play
deep in the mountain far far away.
Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

A girl is on the bus
On her way home
from a ballet lesson.
Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.
One by one, cats gather under the tree.

This is a shop that makes dresses and pants. The shopkeeper is about to close the curtain for the night.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

The baby is gazing at the moon.
This is night, each in each in their own night.

The big round moon shines like a gift.

Someone is playing guitar.
He is practicing the same melody again and again.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

She is laughing with the sky.
A whale jumps out of the water in a far far away sea.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

An old man is washing dishes after dinner.
An old woman puts away the clean plates and cups.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

The baby is gazing at the moon.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.
Everyone is looking up at the sky.

Tonight, a big round moon in the sky.

The moon shines brilliant like a gift.