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Good-Bye



Synopsis

Drawn in 1971 and 1972, these stories expand Yoshihiro Tatsumi's prolific artist's vocabulary for characters contextualized by themes of depravity and disorientation in twentieth-century Japan. Some of the tales focus on the devastation the country felt as a result of World War II: in one story a man devotes twenty years to preserving the memory of those killed at Hiroshima, only to discover a horrible misconception at the heart of his tribute. Yet, while American influence does play a role in the disturbing and bizarre stories contained within this volume, as always it is Tatsumi's characters that bear his hallmark, muddling through isolated despair and fleeting pleasure to live out their darkly nuanced lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Yoshihiro Tatsumi: "'Abandon the Old in Tokyo' is a revealing time capsule and a strangely moving portrait of survival in a land where everything is changing." --"Time "'These stories . . . reveal an artist who was making comics that weren't just adult, but truly mature." --"The Village Voice"

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Born in 1935, Yoshihiro Tatsumi, who has influenced generations of cartoonists, lives in Japan.

Non-pretentious, quality comics from Japan. Tatsumi is a leading figure, and irreplaceable exponent of the manga canon. A world of difference from some of the more popular and stylized examples of later-generational manga. Tatsumi boils his craft down to an essential and bold simplicity.

Tatsumi does not let you down.

tatsumi is essential. simple as that.

Japanese artist Yoshihiro Tatsumi proves that comics, often associated with puerile adolescent escapism, can explore deep and disturbing elements of human life. He coined the term "gekiga" for a very adult-oriented subgenre of manga that encompasses everything from violence, perversion and alienation to even outright desperation. Often shocking in their portrayal of everyday people lost in the mass, they miraculously never come off as gratuitous or sensationalist. They seem largely realistic and true to human nature, which may explain their penetrating emotional power. Though Tatsumi's books have appeared in many comic book stores, often sitting right next to manga for teens and pre-teens, these remain adult comics through and through. They would without doubt receive at least an "R" rating today, though at the time of their writing many may have argued for "X." Nudity, sex, violence, scenes of death, mutilation and themes situated light years outside of the realm of more youth-targeted escapist manga permeate nearly every story. This work reveals aspects of reality that some would probably rather not consider, but that many know exist regardless of our idealistic wishes for humanity. Tatsumi manages to show us pieces of who we really are, an incredible achievement for comic art. Comic publishers Drawn and Quarterly have reissued numerous volumes of Tatsumi's work in English from the 1950s to the present. The third volume, "Good-Bye" features short stories from the early 1970s. A chilling story, "Hell," opens the book and features a horrendously misinterpreted shadow burnt into a building by the Hiroshima atomic bomb. A photographer re-energizes his fame by selling a photograph of this image and all of Japan rejoices and celebrates the humanity of what appears as a son dutifully rubbing his mother's back at the time of the bomb's detonation. One of Tatsumi's best and most disturbing stories, it sears into the conscience and deconstructs the human trait of seeing the best in everything. It also contains this volume's most horrifying imagery in depicting post-war Hiroshima. Not for the morally or visually squeamish. "Woman in the Mirror" challenges notions of masculinity and the pressures it exerts, not to mention the sometimes crushing social isolation of gender roles and expectations. "Night Falls Again" explores social and sexual loneliness in the mass. A young man trapped in a menial job

frequents strip clubs and peep shows and finds out that he can't relate to real women. Though he revels in the seediness of Osaka, it also overwhelms him to the point of vomiting. Sex obsesses him to the point of all out entrapment and distraction. Total acquiescence seems his only option, or at least the only one he entertains. "Just a Man" finds an old man finally achieving his dream girl, but this astonishing realization keeps some important things from functioning properly. "Life is so Sad" deals with fickle loyalty. A woman working as a "companion" in a night club awaits the release of her husband following four years of incarceration. The man treats her with contempt when she visits him in prison. She professes deep love though he laughs in her face while accusing her of disloyalty. One night before his release, she breaks down and shatters all expectations. The story's final panel will leave readers pondering the woman's intentions and psychology, though some may disturbingly understand and relate. "Click Click Click" looks at the solitude of fetishism and perversion. An independently wealthy man seeks pleasure through women's boots and heels while simultaneously performing acts of charity. He lives for the clicking sound of women's shoes. "Good-bye," the final story, takes place in post-war Japan. An American soldier woos a poor woman and promises to marry her. Her father comes only to beg for money. Following further betrayals, she disowns her own father in an inconceivable way that the vast majority of daughters wouldn't even acknowledge. "Now he's just another man..." she tells herself. Guilt, loss and the humiliation of losing the war reverberate in the story's recesses. Not for the faint of heart, this volume further testifies to Tatsumi's artistic and literary skills. He flouts the narrative form to great effect, dashing expectations of happy endings, some sort of "life lesson" or conclusive resolution. These stories may hit a little too close to home for some people, causing either cathartic convalescence or rabid disavowals of their categorization as "entertainment." Indifferent reactions seem the most unlikely. Thanks to Drawn and Quarterly, Tatsumi has now found an audience in the United States, though the book's introduction states that he remains almost unknown in Japan. In the book's closing interview, Tatsumi claims that none of his work received much response until a French translation appeared in 1983. His work didn't reach a wide audience until the publication of these collections in English began around 2005. He says he remained fairly poor throughout his artistic career. Thankfully, the relative popularity of these books has led to further releases of his work, including brand new material. Some things apparently take time.

Tatsumi sensei is both an incredible illustrator and story-teller. He has the total package. I immediately went and ordered more of his books. This one was hardbound and the binding is excellent; perhaps because the publisher is Canadian and quality is still valued. The paper,

however, could have been of better quality. A book like this is a keepsake and can be passed on, so quality paper is a must. Ironically, in its original manifestation "manga" such as this are printed on cheap, disposable paper. There are a couple of decent introductory and critical essays as well. One of them is by Adrian Tomine; a fine illustrated novel artist in his own right although his approach to life is whiny and soft like most contemporary alternative types of suburban origins. I can understand why he would be attracted to Tatusmi, whose outlook is more one of base-level survival. A snapshot of Tatsumi Yoshihiro appears at the back of the book; a poignant photo indeed. He doesn't look like a tubercular artist cooped up in a tiny "apaato" in a haze of cigarette smoke. Rather, he looks like a healthy and robust rice farmer. Tatsumi captures the Japan of the immediate postwar years in a way unlike any other body of literature I have encountered. Only certain b/w vintage films by Ozu, Kurosawa, or Mizuguchi come close. But Tatsumi is far more raw and gritty than any of these masters of cinema. His politics (e.g. anti-US military occupation) seems to have escaped the censors; perhaps because "manga" were not gone through methodically for subversive content. I definitely will seek out more work by Tatsumi and hope that a full length biography or critical survey is available in English soon. No doubt some grad student is writing a dissertation at this very moment on the work of Tatsumi.

This is standard Tatsumi, an amazing story that you need to read and find out more about the struggles of Japan. The artwork is amazing, and you'll find a surprise at the end of the book. Get it and read it!

Hits like a punch in the gut. Life seen clearly, beauty and horror. A must, as is the whole series. It is difficult for me to look at the cover art, because of the despair and hopelessness and debauchery of the story it is taken from.

Possibly the best graphic shorts I've ever read. Utterly devastating and beautiful. This is graphic story telling at its best.

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