



Kurodahan Press would like to present for your review:

Oh, Tama!

—Kanai Mieko

Translated by Tomoko Aoyama & Paul McCarthy
ISBN: 978-4-902075-67-0
Pages: 190
Size: 5" x 8" (127mm x 203mm), softcover
List Price: US\$13.00



Oh, Tama! takes the reader deep into the haphazard lives of Natsuyuki, the protagonist, and his loosely connected circle of dysfunctional acquaintances and family. Trying to keep some semblance of order and decency in his life, working as an occasional freelance photographer, Natsuyuki is visited by his delinquent friend Alexandre, who unexpectedly entrusts him with his sister's pregnant cat, Tama. Despite his initial protests, Natsuyuki accepts his new responsibility and cares compassionately for Tama and her kittens.

Awarded the Women's Literature Prize in Japan, *Oh, Tama!* is the second book in the Mejiro Series, named after the area of Tokyo between the mega-towns of Shinjuku and Ikebukuro. The main characters (not to mention the author and her artist sister Kanai Kumiko) all live in this area. Most of the main characters in one book appear as side characters in the others. Natsuyuki and Alexandre, for example, appear in the third work in the series, *Indian Summer*. The protagonists of that book—Momoko, Hanako and Momoko's writer-aunt—all appear first in *Oh, Tama!*.

These Mejiro texts are full of humor and irony. While earlier works of Kanai are noted for their surrealistic, sensuous and poetic style and arresting, at times violent themes, the Mejiro novels focus on the human comedy in the seemingly mundane, actual world. The protagonists of the series are, however, in one way or another engaged in creative or intellectual activities, even though they are often unemployed or at loose ends.

While a few of the author's short stories, poems, and excerpts from her longer works were translated into English beginning in the late 1970s, and attracted some attention among feminist literary scholars, this is only the third book-length English translation of her work, following *The Word Book* and *Indian Summer*.

A copy of your review to the below address would be greatly appreciated.