

*About Waseda Bungaku's  
charity project and this book*

This book brings together short stories written for a charity program established on March 15, 2011 by the literary magazine *Waseda Bungaku* in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake. Included in this volume are two round table discussions as well as numerous studies and essays published after the earthquake in *Waseda Bungaku* and the free paper *WB*.

The charity program was carried out primarily in the following four forms: (1) the sale of signed published material by participating authors\*<sup>1</sup>; (2) through the sale of original works in PDF format and an appeal for donations which accompanied transmission of files sold\*<sup>2</sup>; (3) an appeal for donations which accompanied free PDFs of English language translations of all works and Chinese and Korean translations of selected works\*<sup>3</sup>; (4) and a charity auction\*<sup>4</sup>.

The works compiled for the charity program begin with “Poola’s Return” by Hideo Furukawa that appeared at the end of March and concludes with the publication in late September of Kiyoshi Shigematsu’s “To Next Spring – *Obon*.” In the span of six months fifteen original works were released to the public. None of these works were composed with ease: it is obvious each swell with both hesitation and sincerity. A portion of these short stories have been republished, having already appeared in *Waseda Bungaku vol. 4* and *WB*, as well as the anthology *March Was Made of Yarn* whose editor, David Karashima, is mentioned below.

At the same time participant Minami Aoyama and Koji Toko, as well as David Karashima (introduced by Toko) served to coordinate translators for the English translation project\*<sup>5</sup>. With Michael Emmerich topping the list these young translators of contemporary Japanese

literature, after having read all the works, chose the ones they felt were best suited for them. They accepted an arduous task to be completed in a short amount of time. In an attempt to maintain the nuance of a Japan immediately after the disaster in Furukawa's "Poole's Return," as well as to give voice to the peculiar literary style of Furukuri Kinoshita's "The Cambrian Palace Bombing Project," native speaker of Japanese Satoshi Katagiri took charge of these translations. In a similar fashion Kyōka Izumi coordinated the Chinese language translations and proofreading while Nagi Yoshikawa checked Korean translations.

I would like to use this space to thank those who, weaving through busy schedules, participated in the project: contributors to *Waseda Bungaku* Hiroki Azuma, Mieko Kawakami, and Shigehiko Hasumi who autographed books; those who appeared at public signing sessions such as Jungo Aoki, Mariko Asabuki, Kazushige Abe, Akio Nakamori, Aoko Matsuda, Sayaka Murata; Shigeki Tamagawa who provided valuable original illustrations as well as drafts for the charity auction. I thank these creators who confronted the disaster head-on and chose to make art in the face of adversity. I would also like to express my gratitude to, among many others, Kishin Shinomiya, whose collection of photographs *ATOKATA* discovered an overwhelming beauty in the landscape of the damaged areas, providing the image that wraps our cover.

Makoto Ichikawa

Translated by Christopher Lowy

\*1 A List of all participants can be found on page [216](#) (for information on the English, Korean, and Chinese versions).

\*2 Those who purchased files may freely transfer them for a predetermined time limit of one year from their date of publication. Those who received files were urged at the end of each piece to donate what they felt to be an appropriate sum of money to a donation bank account such as that of Red Cross Japan.

\*3 The free transmission of foreign language versions is also permitted for a prescribed time beginning from date of publication. In that case, the recipient of the donation shall be each country's Red Cross or donation bank account that addresses disasters or

accidents from all over the world.

\*<sup>4</sup> This was carried out in the form of participation in the “East Japan Earthquake Charity Auction” ([http://topic.auctions.yahoo.co.jp/charity/2011sanrikuoki\\_eq/index.html](http://topic.auctions.yahoo.co.jp/charity/2011sanrikuoki_eq/index.html)) sponsored by Yahoo! JAPAN.

\*<sup>5</sup> See ‘A Word on the Translations’ by David Karashima on page 178 (for information on the English, Korean, and Chinese versions) for more about the translation process.