

Momoko and Manga: Seiichi Hayashi's Maternal Roots Ryan Holmberg

Seiichi Hayashi's name is indelibly associated with *Garo*, the legendary monthly comics magazine, which, in turn, is virtually synonymous with "alternative manga." From the magazine's founding in 1964 to its temporary demise in 1997, whether crafting new narrative forms, incorporating visual ideas from contemporary art and film, favoring fresh forms of graphic expression over conventional technical skills, striking to the existential core of young adulthood in developing Japan, or diving to the depths of vulgarity, *Garo's* artists repeatedly redefined what it meant to make comics.

Debuting in the magazine's November 1967 issue at the age of twenty-two, Hayashi was one of the first *Garo* artists to make experimentalism his monthly métier. Older artists like founder Sanpei Shirato (b. 1932), Shigeru Mizuki (b. 1922), and Yoshiharu Tsuge (b. 1937) had been publishing work in *Garo* that might not have been initially welcomed in mainstream venues. But their style was nonetheless firmly rooted in the graphic styles, storytelling techniques, and literary sources of an earlier moment—the mid to late fifties,



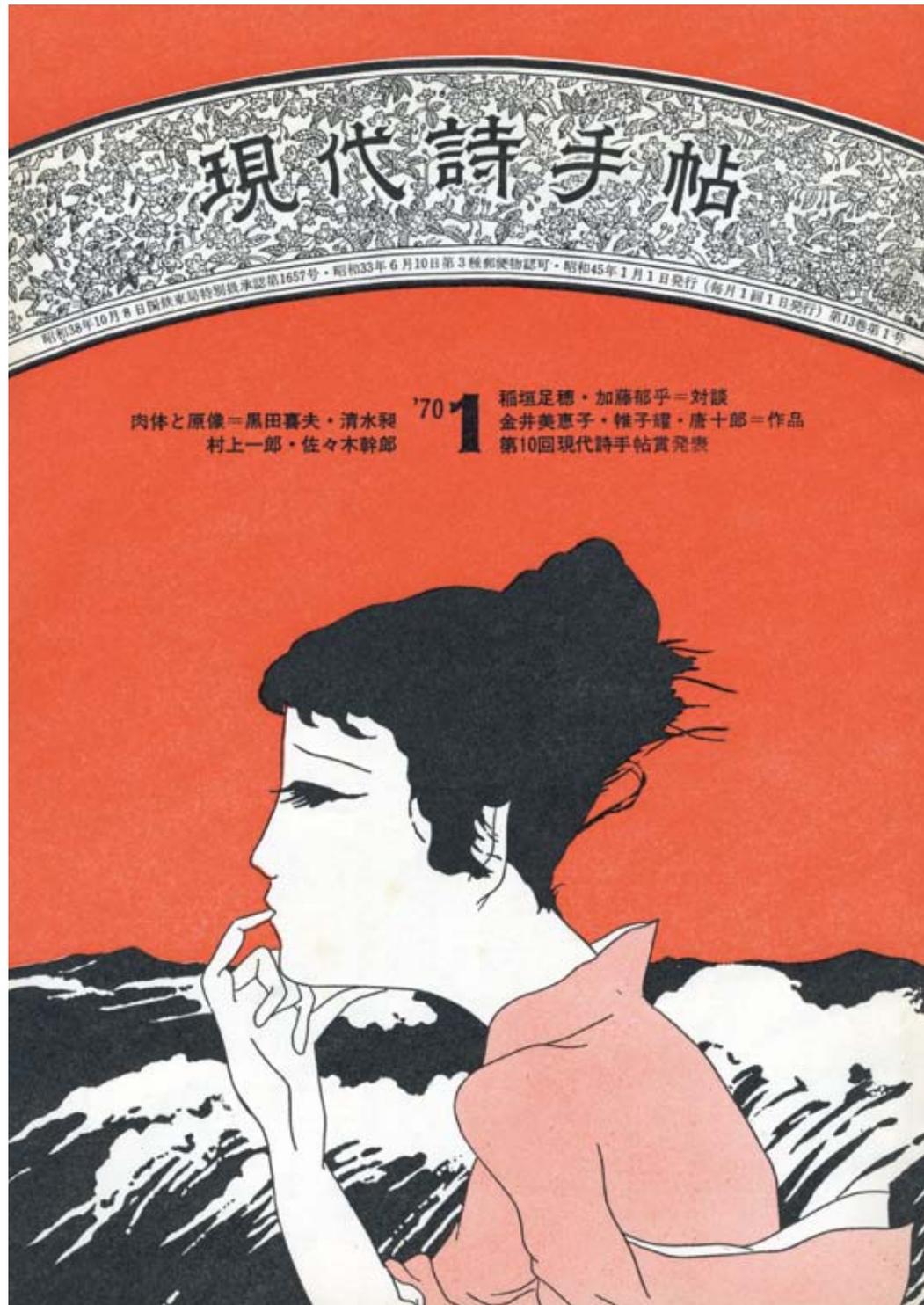
Seiichi Hayashi (early 1970s),
photographer unknown.



Garo No. 72 (February 1970),
supplementary issue
on the artist.

when they themselves had emerged. Born in 1945 and thus by some years these other artists' junior, Hayashi helped take *Garo* in new directions, both inward—with works engaging his personal life and the struggles of being a young artist—and outward—with an oeuvre that transcended comics and mixed with the wider world of Tokyo's vibrant counterculture.

Hayashi's activities in the late sixties and early seventies are paradigmatic of the crossing of artistic media typical of those years. His manga incorporate drawing styles and storytelling techniques derived from animation, traditional Japanese art, American comics, French and Japanese nouvelle vague film, yakuza movies, and popular music.¹ The popularity of his *Garo* work brought him commissions for poster designs from underground theater troupes, set designs from experimental filmmakers, and cover designs for books,



Contemporary Poetry Journal (*Gendai shi techō*, January 1970).



Morio Agata, *Red Colored Elegy*,
7" single (Bellwood Records,
April 1972).

magazines, and music albums. His most famous manga, *Red Colored Elegy* (*Sekishoku erejii*, 1970–71), which tells the story of a young man and woman trying to keep their relationship together while juggling family problems and the pressure of working as freelance animators, inspired first a hit single in 1972 by folk singer Morio Agata before being turned into a film in 1974 by the same. Hayashi was not only a respected artist; he was also a small-time pop star.

Using know-how learned while working at Tōei Animation Studios from 1962 to 1965, Hayashi also made his own short animated films, screened at art-film festivals at home and in Europe. In 1973, he directed his first and only live-action film, *Rubbing Our Cheeks Together in Dreams* (*Yume ni hohoyose*), produced by the notorious Kōji Wakabayashi and screened at Sasori-za, the famous independent ATG theater. Around 1970, he started making drawings, prints, and paintings of impassioned *shōjo* and willowy *bijinga* (traditional beautiful women), collected in a handful of limited-edition books and exhibited in prominent Tokyo galleries in the early and mid seventies. His character designs and TV-commercial animation work for Lotte Koume (Little Plum) candy drops, which debuted in 1974, won numerous domestic and international prizes. His images of a young girl in kimono with puckered lips from the sourness remain on the candy's packaging to this day.

By this point, Hayashi's career had moved away from the polymathic experimentalism of his twenties and into more regular illustration work. He



Garo No. 121
(September 1973).

continued to receive awards into the eighties, including the Elba Prize at the Bologna International Children's Book Fair in 1984 for his drawings for Miyako Moriyama's *Cat Photo Studio* (*Neko no shashinkan*, 1983). His last major manga work, a reflection on art, aging, and sex titled *The pH 4.5 Guppy Will Not Die* (*Ph 4.5 guppī wa shinanai*), was serialized partially in *Comic Baku* and *Garo* between 1987 and 1990, before being collected as a book from Seirindō, *Garo's* publisher, in 1991. That year, for Shōgakukan's men's monthly *Big Gold*, Hayashi began *Yumemakura* (*Dream Pillow*), a reflection on Japanese aesthetics using celluloid transparencies, later refurbished in CG and reissued as a color folio edition in 2007. He has remained involved in the world of alternative manga as a judge for the yearly new-talent award for *Ax*, *Garo's* successor.

Thus, when Hayashi wrote "Azami Light" in late 1972, his career was



Garo No. 51 (September 1968),
supplementary issue titled
"Strange Manga Masterworks."

about to turn a corner. His popularity within Tokyo's cultural scene was at its height. The occasion for the essay was a collection of Hayashi's manga from Seirindō, titled simply *The Seiichi Hayashi Collection* (*Hayashi Seiichi sakuhinshū*). Hayashi had recently abandoned "Gold Pollen," a nebulous allegory about postwar Japanese identity, modeled on those he had published in *Garo* in 1967–69. He continued to draw covers and comics for the magazine on occasion, but "Gold Pollen" would be the last big thing he did for *Garo* until *The pH 4.5 Guppy*. Into the late eighties, he drew for a new alternative venue named *Yakō* (*Night Wandering*), founded by former *Garo* editor and manga critic Shinzō Takano in 1972. Amongst the scattered comics he wrote later in the seventies and early eighties was *Melancholy Momoko* (*Yūtsu na Momoko*), a color serial about the everyday life of a young girl named after his

own mother, begun in 1976 for *Paper Moon*, a woman's subculture magazine edited by Shūji Terayama. But 1972 marked more or less the end of Hayashi's heyday as an experimental manga artist, and the retrospective tone of "Azami Light"—a thoughtful autobiographical reflection for a twenty-seven-year-old—suggests that Hayashi sensed change.

One cannot explain the genesis of Hayashi's original contributions to the comics medium without exploring the influences of the manga he read as a child and adolescent, his training as a design professional in the early sixties, his three years as an inbetweeners and key-frame artist at Tōei, and his work for smaller animation studios later in the decade. But as "Azami Light" suggests, perhaps the single greatest influence on his work, as on his life, was his mother, Momoko (1918–93). One often thinks of *shōjo* manga of the fifties and sixties as being singularly obsessed with the relationship between daughters and mothers. Yet the extent to which the teaching and person of Momoko shaped Hayashi's work on both formal and thematic levels makes his oeuvre truly unique.

If there is no father in "Azami Light," it is because he died when his son, born March 7, 1945, was not yet one year old. The family had been stationed in Yingkou, in Manchukuo, the puppet state controlled by the Japanese in northeast China. At Hayashi's birth, the empire was readying to fall. That week, American bombers began flattening Japan's cities. Okinawa was about to be invaded. Land battles on the continent were going the way of the Chinese. In August, the Soviet Union invaded from the north. Even after the war ended, in some cases it took years for Japanese nationals to be repatriated from the former colonies.²

While waiting for permission to return to Japan from Dalian, Hayashi's father, an employee for a private company half-run by the colonial authorities, died of malnutrition and severe cold. So did Hayashi's only sister, his senior by four years. "I have scars from frostbite on one of my feet," the artist explained in an interview in 1992. "Nutrition was bad, there was nothing to eat. Chiang Kai-shek promised no retributions for past wrongs, but because the Japanese were sequestered in their own area, nonetheless . . . food didn't get in. People just withered away. Northern Manchuria was not like mainland Japan. We're talking nights tens of degrees below zero. People died."³ What remained of his family (he and his mother) finally returned to Japan in 1947. Hayashi was two. Momoko was thirty.

Hayashi's own personal memories begin in Japan in the late forties, while living with his mother first in Chiba, her family home, before settling in Nakano, in western Tokyo. The latter is the setting of "Azami Light," specifically



Garō No. 98 (October 1971).

the area where Nakano Sun Plaza now stands, that gigantic slab of a building visible to the left as one exits north from Nakano Station. In the fifties, this area was filled with wooden *nagaya* row houses; Hayashi and his mother stayed in one of the last of these houses before his new job at Tōei enabled them, in 1962, to move to Shimo-ochiai, located between Shinjuku and Ikebukuro.

Hayashi was an avid reader of manga, as "Azami Light" makes clear. But unlike most baby-boomer *manga shōnen*, his artistic background was informed by a certain upper-class nurture that was at odds with the economic difficulties of his own childhood. His father had been a graduate of the elite Kyoto University. His mother was the eldest daughter of a lawyer and former head of the Nakano School (Rikugun Nakano Gakkō), the primary intelligence

training academy for the Imperial Japanese Army. But with her parents having died during the war, and no inherited property to fall back on, after repatriation Hayashi's mother found herself in a situation in stark contrast to her own comfortable upbringing. In various texts, including a book-length reminiscence of life with his mother, *Momoko and Me* (*Momoko san to boku*, 1994), Hayashi attributes her mental breakdown in the fifties in part to broken class pride.⁴

Momoko was versed in the cultural trappings expected of a woman of her class: calligraphy, painting, ikebana, and the various craft arts Japanese group under the name *shugei* (handicraft)—origami and forms of paper and cloth braiding and wrapping. She forced this culture upon her son in different ways. "In elementary school, one had to eat the meals provided by school. Once in a while, however, we were allowed to bring our own *bentō* lunch from home. Momoko put her all into it. Against a backdrop of yellow egg, she'd arrange pink *denbu* fish flakes like flowering cherry blossoms. I don't think she ever gave a thought to what my classmates would think. It probably never even occurred to her that their eyes would make a beeline for my lunch, nor that it would become the butt of their jokes. That's why I hated *bentō* day. The night before I'd beg her, over and over, please, anything but an artistic *bentō*."⁵

She also steered him toward fine art. "Calligraphy, abacus, oil painting . . . when I got bored with one thing, she'd look for the next. She tried hard to find the bud of some talent in me from an early age." Oil painting lessons continued the longest. Every Saturday, Momoko took her son to a private atelier in the Arai Yakushi neighborhood, north of Nakano. "And then during summer vacation, we'd pack up the oil paints and head for the sea. She forced me to paint on the beach. It took some courage to stand like that before a canvas with so many people around. I'd start painting, and people would come and watch, making me completely nervous. I hated those hours. I think they are to blame for why I still dislike to draw from life outdoors."⁶

This episode echoes that in "Azami Light" of the young Seiichi drawing for the sake of guests at home. One might first read the latter anecdote as testimony of a child's precociousness. But it equally expresses a parent's class, and the exertion of a traditional form of acculturation upon Hayashi at an early age. One typically thinks of overt classicizing traits in Hayashi's *Garo* manga and illustration work as directly linked to Japanese art history, and sometimes they are. But it is important to remember the mediating influence of his mother: inky brush strokes, reference to Edo prints, graphic flatness, origami cranes—stereotyped signs of "Japanese-ness"—often occur as a means to figure the emotional world of troubled women and grieving mothers raised in a more



Garo No. 100 (December 1971).

tradition-bound age, distraught because forced to survive in one less secure. One might see these traits as "classical," but they are also "popular" in the sense that they derive from and symbolically embody notions of culture and motherhood held by many Japanese.

The notes below seek to draw out the connections between Hayashi's famed *Garo* work and his relationship with his mother. They also aim to elucidate the wide-ranging references of his work, which are readily understood by most Japanese, though not by readers lacking familiarity with the country's history and culture. Much more could be said about the works from the vantages of cultural and political history. The goal here is to stay within the purview of "Azami Light."



The Seiichi Hayashi Collection
(Seirindō, December 1972),
slipcase cover.

花に棲む

Dwelling in Flowers was originally published as "Hana ni sumu" in *The Seiichi Hayashi Collection*, released by *Garo* publisher Seirindō in December 1972.

"Azami Light" was written as the afterword to the same book.

The manga was originally printed with a now defunct offset technique. "I am not sure of the details," wrote Hayashi in the early nineties, "but apparently the method was used actively before the war for printing posters. At the time, it was still eking by with jobs for labels on toilet-paper wrappers and apple crates."⁷

Hayashi has described "Dwelling in Flowers" as an "I-novel" (*shishōsetsu*), referring to that type of confessional semi-autobiographical literature, told in the first person, typically by a male protagonist, that is regarded as one of the distinctive genres of modern Japanese literature.⁸ In *Momoko and Me*, Hayashi identified the specific setting of the manga as follows. It was the spring of 1969 and he and his mother had just moved from their apartment in Nakai, in western Tokyo, to a house in Fuchū, a town west of the city. Hayashi was engaged to be married, and had rented larger quarters with a view to a future family. "But the marriage plans collapsed. Momoko forced her way between my fiancée and I, breaking things apart. I had grown tired of Momoko. I wanted to live alone. I wanted to live by myself and rethink my relationship with her. I wanted space and time." He moved his mother to nearby Den'en Chōfu, and himself (at the urging of critic Junzō Ishiko) to Jūnisō in west Shinjuku, into the famous Hoshi Apartments, down the hall from Yoshiharu Tsuge and his wife. Residence in Fuchū had not lasted five months.⁹

While mothers appeared frequently in Hayashi's previous work, with coded reference to his own mother as early as 1968, the direct incorporation of Momoko began right after this period, and in a quite literal fashion. In late 1969, Hayashi began painting stand-alone pictures. The first collection of this work was published as *Scarlet Crime Flowers* (*Kōhanka*, March 1970) with Gentōsha, a small house run by Shinzō Takano, editor at *Garo*. Most show a young girl wearing colorful *yukata* (cotton summer kimono) in dramatic poses; others are monochrome pen illustrations in a style similar to that of *Red Colored Elegy*, on which he was working at the time. Many of the images are accompanied by poetic inscriptions in cursive "grass script" (*sōsho*). These, like the calligraphic title pages of many of his *Garo* manga, including "Red Dragonfly," were done by his mother. Furthermore, each copy of the book in its first printing (a limited edition of 1,000) contained an origami crane folded by Momoko and glued to the endpapers. *Senbazuru*—"one thousand cranes,"



Scarlet Crime Flowers (Gentōsha, March 1970),
origami crane by the artist's mother.

a popular symbol of well-wishing—for her son, with whom she no longer lived.

Origami cranes appear a number of times in “Dwelling in Flowers.” On one page, Momoko is shown folding them against a field of black. While living in Nakai in the late sixties, Hayashi would often return home at night to find his mother sitting alone in darkness. “After a few times, I realized that Momoko remained motionless as long as I was out. She’d leave the lights off, even after dark, and just sit there in the room doing nothing. Even while out I’d get worried, thinking of Momoko sitting there by herself . . . What did she think about? Her happy childhood? Her dream-filled college days? Was she going over her life again and again, looking for yet another misfortune to affirm her unhappiness? . . . Finding no joy even in her son’s success, she just sat there, folding *koyori* [braided paper] and cranes, not moving . . . Wherever you thought Momoko might have been, there would inevitably be *koyori* and origami cranes littered about. As the fallen leaves announce autumn, so they told of Momoko’s furtive existence.”¹⁰

In 1976, as part of its Saturday one-hour drama programming, the national public television station NHK aired a three-part “Gekiga Series,” adapting the work of artists from *Garo*. “Dwelling in Flowers” was the title of one of the installments, though content-wise it derived from *Red Colored Elegy*, not the present manga.

赤とんぼ

Red Dragonfly was originally published as “Akatonbo” in *Garo* no. 46 (June 1968). Hayashi would create a fair number of manga with overt classicizing traits over the years; this was the first. Of his manga, it is second in fame only to *Red Colored Elegy*.

“Red Dragonfly” was partially inspired by Hayashi’s childhood experiences. In “Azami Light,” he describes a male caller’s night visit to his home, and the distance that grew between him and his mother due to this shady liaison. In a small article on the subject of tears for the magazine *COM* in 1970, Hayashi was more specific about the autobiographical basis of the work. “The first time I saw my mother cry, I must have been in either third or fourth grade. I woke up in the middle of the night and found her staring at a single spot on the ceiling, her tears flowing. Literally flowing. They dropped silently from her wide-open, bloodshot eyes. Tears slowly filled her eyes, and then listlessly flowed over, again filling up, a rhythm like pulsing blood. I thought it strange, watching, thinking that they were like living things. I felt that her heart itself was weeping. Those tears, even before I had started watching, even after I stopped, slowly filled her eyes, listlessly flowed over, and disappeared. ‘Red Dragonfly,’ which I drew for *Garo*, was about that.”¹¹

As with “Dwelling in Flowers,” in “Red Dragonfly” Hayashi translates the personal into widely popular terms. Japanese readers recognize the title immediately. It comes from a children’s song of the same name, based on a poem by Rofū Miki (1889–1964) from 1921, set to music by composer Kōsaku Yamada (1886–1965) in 1927. Probably the most famous children’s song in Japan, “Red Dragonfly” has a complicated history of reception. It describes specifically the poet’s sadness as a young boy when his nanny left to marry at the age of fifteen, never to return. Because the word used in the song for nanny (*neeya*) can also be used for sister, many Japanese know “Red Dragonfly” instead as a eulogy about sibling separation, imagined from the viewpoint of a younger sibling, standing amongst hovering dragonflies against the autumn sunset. The lyrics are as follows.

Red dragonfly of the dwindling dusk
When was it that I saw it alight?

The mulberry fruit from the mountain fields
Was it an illusion that a branch was caught in the carriage?

My nanny of fifteen has gone off to be a bride
And no longer does she even hear from home

Red dragonfly of the dwindling dusk
Sits there still on the end of the clothes pole

As Japan's modernization progressed, and increasing numbers of young people began moving to the cities to find work and a better life, the emotive rural landscape of "Red Dragonfly" became more important than its specific theme of female rite of passage and nanny-child or sibling separation. Hayashi's manga seems to touch on both, evoking stereotypes of *furusato* (rural hometown) with thatched roofs, bamboo groves, and floating dragonflies, while relating the sentiments of the song to his own mother's life, whose arranged marriage carried her off to Manchuria. She never saw her parents again; they passed away before she returned to Japan in 1947. Momoko's calligraphy on the title page, and Hayashi's use of ink-brush techniques learned as a child under his mother's direction, establishes a connection between the manga and his mother at a graphic level.

While creating "Red Dragonfly," there was a second song on Hayashi's mind: "Village Autumn" ("Sato no aki"), written by Nobuo Saitō (1911–87) and composed by Minoru Kainuma (1909–71) in 1945. Soon after the war, the Japanese Ministry of Welfare established Repatriation Support Bureaus (Hikiage engō kyoku) throughout the country for returning soldiers and civilians stationed in the former colonies. Hayashi and his mother were processed at the one in Maizuru, near Kyoto. The Bureau also hosted a radio program that provided information to dispersed families about the whereabouts of recent returnees. Its theme song was "Village Autumn," about a boy with his mother in the countryside waiting for father to return from the South Pacific.

Quiet quiet village autumn
Through the back door at night I see nuts falling from the tree
Ah, just my mother and I alone
Chestnuts boiling on the hearth

Bright bright stars in the sky
Crying crying ducks I hear crossing the night
Ah, my father's smiling face
I recall while eating chestnuts

Farewell farewell palm tree island
Going home on the swaying boat
Ah, father, I hope you are well
Tonight again mother and I pray

"As a child," Hayashi explains, "I didn't realize what the song was really about. I simply liked the image of a mother and son living peacefully together in a mountain village. When I started writing the manga, I revisited 'Village Autumn' and was surprised to find how similar it was to my own circumstances as a child." To strengthen that personal connection, Hayashi placed an *i'ei* (death portrait) of a father on the wall in the panel showing mother and son eating, whereas in "Village Autumn" the father's survival is still hoped for.

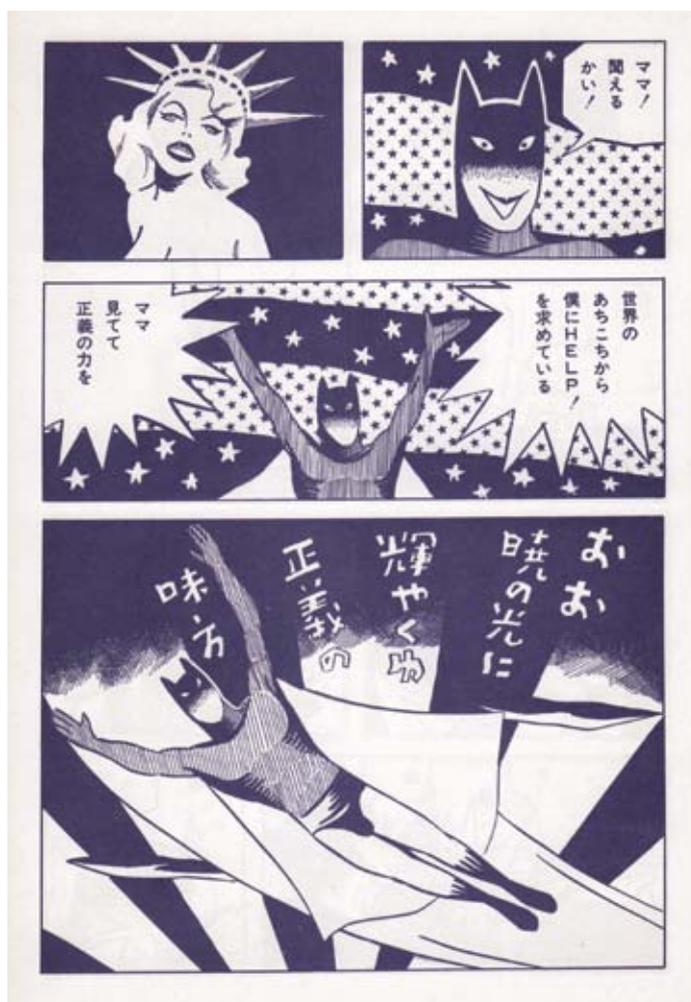
That the work is not purely autobiographical is clear from two things. First, the single mother of "Red Dragonfly" is a war widow in the typical sense. The *i'ei* depicts a man in military uniform. In contrast, Momoko's husband, Hayashi's father, was not a soldier, and died of health complications during the hard period between surrender and repatriation. Second, Hayashi has no *furusato* to speak of. He was born in colonial China and has no memory of the place. He was raised in urban Tokyo and has only the dimmest recollection of being taken to his mother's family home in Chiba, about which she spoke very little.

Given its thematic concerns, it was appropriate that "Red Dragonfly" was reprinted the following year in the conservative, middle-class women's magazine *Woman's Self* (*Josei jishin*, May 26, 1969). There it was prefaced as being "a much-discussed work dealing with women's love and sex" and having "caused a stir amongst the Zengakuren [the politicized All-University Student Association] and women's college students." This was the first of three Hayashi manga to appear in *Woman's Self*, a testimony to the wide appeal of his manga despite their unconventional formal qualities.

山姥子守唄

Yamanba Lullaby was originally published as "Yamanba komoriuta" in *Garo* no. 50 (September 1968). With this work, Hayashi began experimenting with the aesthetics of Pop art and New Wave cinema. As was the case with many of his contemporaries, this involved a simultaneous plunge into the popular culture of the Edo period and that of postwar Americanization. The repeated appearance of origami cranes in the manga's first pages suggests that this enterprise too was mediated by Hayashi's relationship with his mother.

One would never guess from a work like "Red Dragonfly," but Hayashi's entry into *Garo* was through a series of allegories dealing with the fate of postwar Japan under the shadow of American power and culture. American comic book superheroes appear in a couple, as they do in "Yamanba Lullaby." His first submission to *Garo*, which was rejected, was about two supermen—that is,



"Oh, into the Dawn's Light,"
Garo No. 42 (February 1968).

two Supermans in the DC style—forced to battle it out, despite being friends, to decide who is the true defender of truth and justice. In "Oh, into the Dawn's Light" ("Oo, akatsuki no hikari ni," *Garo*, February 1968), a naïve Batman cannot figure out why the world has turned against him.

Hayashi had been picking up American comics at *Iena*, a bookstore in the Ginza specializing in imported Western-language publications and frequented by artists in various fields. Hayashi claims that what struck him most about American comic books were their formal values: the universal rendering of mass through hatching and shading. But as his early *Garo* works show, Hayashi was also interested in the symbolism of the superhero and its bankruptcy against the backdrop of the Vietnam War. Thus it is on the side of oppression that Batman sits in "Yamanba Lullaby." As the back of his chair says, he is the "sponsor" of the Demon King's persecution of Japanese youth. It is not explained why Superman flies southward with an olive branch in his mouth at the manga's beginning, but it might be to go "wage peace" against Indochina. He roars through the sky like the bombers taking off from American military bases in Japan.

To match these overblown expressions of Americanism, references to Japanese popular culture in "Yamanba Lullaby" are also campily exaggerated. Hayashi had recently purchased a set of the first eighteen volumes of the *Ukiyoe Masterworks Collection* (*Ukiyoe meisaku senshū*, 1967–68), from publisher Yamada Shoin. A large-format, color-plate, hardcover-slipcase series, it was the era's luxury library of Edo-period woodblock prints. For "Yamanba Lullaby," Hayashi turned primarily to the two volumes on Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1753–1806). The imagery of the mother copies generally from Utamaro's iconic *bijinga* prints, a major source of modern stereotypes of Edo visual style and traditional Japanese feminine beauty. The reference to "facing mirrors" (*awase kagami*) at the beginning of "Yamanba Lullaby" possibly refers to Utamaro's *Ohisa of Takashimaya with Facing Mirrors* (*Awase kagami no Takashimaya Ohisa*), which shows the daughter of a famous Edo businessman dexterously performing her toilet with a mirror in each hand. Utamaro often exploited female vanity for male visual pleasure, here using the device of the double mirrors to simultaneously show the woman's face and silken nape.¹² In Hayashi's case, the facing mirrors are presumably meant to evoke the pathos of a middle-aged woman's vanity confronted with fading beauty and rebellious adolescent children.

Most important for the core theme of the manga is Utamaro's famous *Yamanba* and *Kintarō* series, from the last years of the eighteenth century.



Kitagawa Utamaro,
*Ohisa of Takashimaya with
 Facing Mirrors* (c. 1795),
 polychrome woodblock print.

Before Utamaro, the Yamanba (also pronounced Yamauba), whose name means “mountain hag,” was a figure of primarily negative associations. In folklore, she beckons weary travelers into her hut and tries to eat their newborns; she sneaks into a farmhouse while the mother is away and devours one of her children. On the other hand, if appeased, she can bring fortune and fertility. In the medieval Noh play *Yamanba*, she functions as a Buddhist symbol of suffering and delusion, forced to wander the mountains perpetually through the cycles of rebirth for her attachments to past wrongdoing.¹³

While this image of the Yamanba as a child-devouring anti-mother continued into the Edo period, she became more popularly known as the mother of Kintarō (Golden Boy), the legendary childhood name of Sakata

Kintoki, one of the generals of the medieval warlord Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948–1021). It is the odd Japanese person today who doesn't know Kintarō's feats of incredible strength, so often have they been told in children's books. In the Edo period, they were well known through puppet plays, kabuki performances, and woodblock prints. He uproots a tree to build a bridge. He wrestles a bear, an eagle, and a giant carp. He rides around on the back of a bear while wielding a giant axe. His skin is typically red in color because he is the son of an *oni* (demon).

This wild mountain child required an adequately uncivilized mother, so Edo chroniclers put him at the breast of the Yamanba. In order to fit existing legends of Yorimitsu's meeting with the superchild Sakata Kintoki, the Yamanba was placed specifically on Mt. Ashigara, the northernmost peak of the caldera above the famous hot springs region of Hakone, whereas in folklore her mountain residence had been unspecific.¹⁴ In Hayashi's manga, rather than being adopted by Yorimitsu to serve as his vassal, Kintarō leaves Mt. Ashigara on his own, in line with the lone wolf yakuza imagery (in the form of actor Ken Takakura) that appears during his first battle with the Demon King's minions. Hayashi's rewriting also reflects the common social phenomenon (mentioned above) of children compelled to leave family and home in the countryside to seek employment, and a more exciting life, in Tokyo.

While puppet and kabuki plays had established precedents for interpreting the Yamanba as a caring mother, Utamaro further sensualized her appearance with the languorous bodily contours, exposed flesh, and postcoital dishevelment common to his *bijinga* prints, which often depict prostitutes. Utamaro's Yamanba and Kintarō series ranges in subject from mother and son playing games to Kintarō having his hair cut and being fed, bathed, dressed, and (most famously) breast-fed by his mother. It is the most intimate of these, the bathing and suckling images, that are reproduced in the Yamada Shoin volumes Hayashi owned. Hayashi describes Utamaro's image of motherhood as “the most cosmopolitan,” versus the grotesqueries of the Noh and folklore tradition. While he uses Utamaro's imagery to classicize post-Taishō stereotypes of the cloying Japanese mother, that older tradition's image of the Yamanba as a bestial and hysteric anti-mother is nonetheless still alive in his manga. Now the Yamanba's barbarity is a function not of childlessness, but of being spurned and abandoned by one's children in middle age—an appropriate reinterpretation for the demographic shifts and generational conflicts of the postwar period. One can also imagine the tensions in Hayashi's personal life.

To dramatize this conflict, Hayashi has turned to other Edo culture, specifically the physical and verbal stylizations of kabuki theater and kabuki



Kitagawa Utamaro, *Yamanba and Kitarō: Breast-feeding* (c. 1795), polychrome woodblock print.

prints. Most obvious is Kintarō's declaration of "Shibaraku!"—"Hold it right there!" If kabuki can be reduced to a single cliché, this is it. Dating back to 1697, "Shibaraku" is the name of a short piece historically staged either in between longer productions or as part of the annual, all-star revue *kaomise* performance. The play is named after its climax. Onstage, an upright but somewhat hapless samurai is being assaulted by a band of villains. Offstage, a voice thunders "Shibaraku!" Warrior Kamakura Gongorō Kagemasa, the ultimate in kabuki male bravado, throws back the curtains and stomps down the raised *hanamichi* that cuts through the audience from the rear of the theater to the stage. He wears ostentatious clothing and thick red-and-white-striped makeup. With a few more stomps of his feet and swings of his sword, the bad men are dispersed and the play ends. The reduced facial stylizations of Kintarō in the corresponding panels of "Yamanba Lullaby" are clearly derived from Edo *yakusha-e* (actor prints) of the Katsukawa school of the late eighteenth century, as is Kintarō's grimacing standing pose on page 69.

It is not just Edo and contemporary Japanese culture that shaped "Yamanba Lullaby." Asked where the robot came from, Hayashi responded that the strongest influence was *The King and the Mockingbird* (*Le Roi et l'oiseau*, original version released in 1952), the legendary French animated feature directed by Paul Grimault. This film was well known by animators at Tōei, where Hayashi worked before becoming a manga artist. It has been cited by Studio Ghibli cofounders Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata as one of their greatest inspirations. When Grimault set out to complete the film in the mid sixties, he explored hiring Japanese animators, approaching Sadao Tsukioka, formerly Hayashi's mentor at Tōei and at the time his boss at Knack (Nakku), a small animation studio. No deal was struck, but the prospect left an impression upon Hayashi. The film's story of a lowly chimney sweep and his beloved shepherdess fleeing from an autocratic king wanting the maiden for himself recalls Kintarō's fight to protect his love from the Demon King Maō. The king of *Le Roi et l'oiseau* likewise drives a giant robot in pursuit of the girl, whom he is determined to marry by force. While the head of Grimault's robot is shaped like a Roman gladiator's helmet, Hayashi constructs his out of cylindrical barrels and protrusions, reminiscent of the tin toy robots of his own childhood in the late forties and fifties.

黄金花粉

Gold Pollen was originally serialized as "Ōgon kafun" in three chapters across *Garo* nos. 98–100 (October–December 1971). It is an unfinished work. While visually a departure for Hayashi in its Expressionist touches, it also marked a return to the allegorical orientation of his manga of the mid to late sixties.

In an afterword to a collection of his manga from 1976, Hayashi linked "Gold Pollen" to an earlier work titled "Flower Poem" ("Hana no uta," *Garo*, February–April 1969). It too is an allegory that the artist quit after three chapters. Graphically in the vein of the sunny Pop–neoclassical mix Hayashi had been exploring since 1968, "Flower Poem" follows a man in his early twenties as he struggles with a corporate job, romance, and the pull of rural home. Said the artist, "I wanted to tell, at an extremely abstract level, the story of a young man



"Flower Poem,"
Garo No. 58 (April 1969).

whose life is dictated completely by sexual desire." The manga was to conclude with the protagonist alone in an urban wasteland, temporarily joining with others to fight against common enemies, but in the end isolated amidst rubble. "The end of 'Flower Poem' was always leftover," Hayashi explained about "Gold Pollen." "This time I decided to approach it from a different angle."¹⁵

The first character to appear in "Gold Pollen" is a horseman wearing a medieval European great helm. He is named Ikki Kita, a historical figure, the only one in the manga. Kita (1883–1937) was an author and activist associated with the rise of Japanese fascism. He promoted colonial expansion in the liberationist terms common to the thinking behind the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. He espoused a form of state socialism, headed by the emperor, under which Japan and East Asia would be united against Western imperialism. Kita's so-called "Shōwa Restoration" helped inspire the notorious February 26 incident in 1936, an attempted coup d'état organized by a cadre of young army officers. They had aimed to assassinate the prime minister and other top political figures, take control of the media, police, and the Imperial Palace, and install the emperor as the sole political authority. While failing in its primary goals, and though its leadership was tried and executed, the event did have the affect, by way of appeasement, of granting greater power to the military in political affairs, leading ultimately to the military government that oversaw Japan's entry into World War II.

During the violent conflicts between right and left, and the impassioned debates about "direct action" versus parliamentary process in the late sixties, Kita's writings and the February 26 incident once again became subjects of focused interest. Then there was Yukio Mishima's suicide in 1970, not a year before Hayashi began drawing "Gold Pollen." Mishima had already dramatized the February 26 coup d'état in his story "Patriotism" ("Yūkoku") from 1961, made into a film in 1966. He had written about Kita in both his novels and nonfiction on multiple occasions mid-decade. In 1967, Mishima enlisted in the Japanese Self-Defense Force and went through basic training. The following year he formed the Shield Society, a private militia recruited from rightwing college students. On November 25, 1970, Mishima and four members of the Shield Society occupied SDF offices in central Tokyo. The novelist called on the barracked soldiers to join him in a coup to restore the emperor's authority, before committing seppuku. *The Sea of Fertility* (*Hōjō no umi*), the series of four novels Mishima had finished just prior to these events, had likewise been inspired by acts of rightwing terrorism and ritual suicide in the thirties, with direct reference to the figure and thought of Kita.

Books, manga, and movies on Kita and the February 26 incident were

quite common in the early seventies, as part of a wider fascination with prewar radicalism. Many also turned to the life, thought, and persecution of Japanese anarchists in the twenties, most famously the anti-statist and free love advocate Sakae Ōsugi (1885–1923), beaten to death by police for his political associations. The films of Yoshishige Yoshida, particularly *Eros Plus Massacre* (*Erosu purasu gyakusatsu*, 1969), about Ōsugi, and *Coup d'État* (*Kaigenrei*, 1973), about February 26, are probably the best known. In 1970, in the same article in *COM* in which he had described his mother's tears, Hayashi praised the prison diaries of Daijirō Furuta (1900–1925), an anarchist arrested and executed as part of a plot to kill a military general in revenge for Ōsugi's death. In "Cleome" ("Suichōka"), published in *Yakō* in April 1972, Hayashi created a melodramatic story about love and assassination reminiscent of Yoshida's *Eros Plus Massacre*. About "Gold Pollen" Hayashi says, "I was thinking of attempts at a postwar restoration [*sengo isshin*], like the student movement and Mishima's February 26. I thought it might be interesting to depict a revolution by the gods." His adoption of Expressionist brushwork and symbols like the horse rider was likely an attempt to evoke the artistic tastes of liberals and anarchists of that transitional era, the Taishō period.

Meanwhile, the Kintarō-Yamanba legend was still on Hayashi's mind. Once again, in "Gold Pollen" the protagonist is a preternaturally strong and rambunctious boy born of the "mountain crone." He is now named Hinomaru, after the national rising sun flag. It is worth noting that, around the time "Gold Pollen" was being drawn, Hayashi had a new run-in with the Yamanba in art history. He had just published a review of Nobuo Tsuji's classic *Lineage of Eccentrics* (*Kisō no keifu*, 1970) in the August 1971 issue of *Contemporary Poetry Journal* (*Gendai shi techō*). Originally serialized under the subtitle "The Edo Avant-Garde" in the art magazine *Bijutsu techō* between July and December 1968, Tsuji's text is known for excavating a number of overlooked Edo painters and printmakers whose brash figures, virile brushwork, obsessive subject matter, and/or rough-and-tumble lifestyles set them at odds with the Apollonian canon represented by the likes of, say, Utamaro and the Katsukawa school—Hayashi's reference points in "Yamanba Lullaby." In his review, Hayashi first spotlights late Edo printmaker Utagawa Kuniyoshi's "leap to stardom at age 30," his dedication to art versus the whoring and drinking of his teacher and colleagues, and his success as a "performing artist" in the sense that he always gave the public what they wanted and double of what they expected. (Was the twenty-five-year-old star Hayashi thinking of himself?) Then he turns to another artist. "Of the various Yamanba I have seen, Nagasawa Rosetsu's reverberates most strongly with the image inside my own head. It is the most



Nagasawa Rosetsu, *Yamanba* (1797), as reproduced in Nobuo Tsuji, *Lineage of Eccentrics* (Bijutsu shuppansha, March 1970).

realistic." He is referring to a painting from 1797 that shows the Yamanba in her traditional harrowed version, with overgrown toenails, weathered face, and an infant Kintarō clinging to her tattered garb.¹⁶ Had Utamaro's sensuous "cosmopolitan" fantasy lost its charm?

Most of the other characters in "Gold Pollen" come from Buddhism. Asked why, Hayashi responded: "The gods of Western antiquity stink of humanity, they are flawed. The Shintō gods of Japan are the same. On the other hand, the Buddhist deities that have been popularized in Japan do not have this human odor; they are lacking in any personal interest. So I thought it might be interesting to draw them instead as humans." Hayashi has cast mainly the lower deities, Buddhism's defenders and enemies, not the Buddhas themselves—in other words, those that fight over mortal souls, rather than the sedentary embodiments of enlightenment.

First there are the Jaki, the goblin-like figures that pester Hinomaru. Their name means “deceitful demon.” They are symbols of the delusion and wrongdoing that make beings stray from the proper Buddhist path. In East Asian art history, the Jaki are mainly known not as independent figures, but as the fat, ugly creatures crushed beneath the feet of the Shitennō, the Four Heavenly Kings who protect the dharma, the Buddhist law. In Hayashi’s manga, young Hinomaru is not only the brother of a Jaki; he sleeps with one too—which suggests young Japan’s association with the powers of delusion rather than enlightenment. But unique to Japanese tradition, there are the figures of Tentōki (Celestial Lamp Demon) and Ryūtōki (Dragon Lamp Demon), two Jaki who have repented after being trampled by the Shitennō and now carry lanterns to light the way of the Buddha. That Hayashi appreciated the Jaki’s ambivalence is noted below.

Toward the end of the manga Indra (Taishakuten in Japanese) appears. In the Mahayana tradition of East Asia, he commands the Four Heavenly Kings, those responsible for protecting the dharma against Jaki-type threats. One of Indra’s avatars is the rooster, which in “Gold Pollen” is presumably also used because of the bird’s associations with male arrogance and aggression. His counterpart, the female Yakshi Goddess (Yasha joshin) with whom he sleeps in chapter three of “Gold Pollen,” is traditionally another guardian figure. They are the buxom nymphs found on temple and stupa gates and walls in India and Southeast Asia. Hayashi may be thinking of her in relationship to Hariti (Kishimojin in Japanese), a popular folk deity in Japan and patron of female fertility, childbirth, and motherhood. Interestingly, given Hayashi’s fascination with the Yamanba, Hariti historically began in South Asia as a cannibalistic demon, only subsequently being transformed into a guardian—similar to the Yamanba’s makeover in the Edo period. As a Yakshi, it is her duty to fight against Jaki-related beings, like Hinomaru, which she does in the manga in the form of a giant skeleton.

This is not one of her typical forms within Hinduism or Buddhism. As evident from the drawing on page 126, Hayashi had been inspired by the famous triptych by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), *Old Palace at Sōma* (*Sōma no furudairi*, c. 1845–46), showing the wicked princess Takiyasha (whose name contains within it the Japanese characters for yakshi), daughter of a failed contender to the throne in Kyoto in the tenth century, calling forth a giant skeleton to defend her against one of the emperor’s emissaries. It is possible Hayashi additionally had in mind the finale of *The Magic Boy* (*Shōnen sarutobi sasuke*, 1959), an early animated feature from Tōei. Hayashi’s Hinomaru has his hair cropped in a fashion similar to the head of that film’s hero, the ninja Sarutobi Sasuke. Furthermore, Sasuke’s archenemy is the sorceress Yasha Princess (Yasha hime), who takes the form of a skeleton in the movie’s climatic battle scene.



Utagawa Kuniyoshi, *Old Palace at Sōma* (c. 1845–46), polychrome woodblock triptych.

Returning to the Jaki: Hayashi had a soft spot for these beasts. One appears in his work as early as “Giant Fish” (“Kyodai na sakana”), in the May 1968 issue of *Garo*. While drawing “Gold Pollen,” he made a four-minute animation titled “Song of Demon Love” (“Kiren-uta”), first screened at the Tokyo Animation Festival 71. It also stars a Jaki, featured in some of the same shadowy interior spaces rendered in “Gold Pollen.” The two are clearly sibling works. Hayashi published a short blurb on “Song of Demon Love” in the November 1971 issue of the magazine *Film (Firumu)*. In its entirety: “I like Jakis. If to live is to become polluted, then people can only live by negotiating sin. Life is the realm of sin and worldly desires. Until death, people bear the sin of living. If that’s the case, if that’s truly the case, someone once said, then one should become a demon. Humans should pursue a philosophy of happiness within this very consciousness of sin. One might call such a person unhappy, but it also gives life to the idea of an inverse utopia. I have never shed tears over my own sins, but I have cried many times over sins committed by heartless others. Thus, I will become a demon god. The Jaki, used as assassins, in this world, the world of sin, see dreams of that other world. Shall we start counting murders instead to put ourselves to sleep?”¹⁷

Should “Dwelling in Flowers,” drawn the following year, also be read as a Jaki and Yamanba story?

- 1 See Ryan Holmberg, "A Drawing Romance: *Red Colored Elegy*," *Art on Paper* (November–December 2008).
- 2 Unless otherwise noted, information pertaining to Hayashi's life and career comes from personal interviews and email exchanges with the artist conducted in 2012–13.
- 3 "Hayashi Seiichi intabyū," *Garō* no. 330 (July 1992), page 15.
- 4 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku* (Tokyo: Pharaoh kikaku, 1994), pages 152–7 and passim; "Hayashi Seiichi intabyū," page 17.
- 5 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku*, page 60.
- 6 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku*, page 62.
- 7 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku*, page 114.
- 8 "Hayashi Seiichi intabyū," page 17.
- 9 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku*, pages 113–4.
- 10 Hayashi, *Momoko san to boku*, pages 109–10.
- 11 Hayashi, "Namida ni tsuite," *COM* (August 1970), reprinted in *Hayashi Seiichi sakuhinshū* (Tokyo: Seirindō, 1972), page 243.
- 12 On these themes in Utamaro's work, see Julie Nelson Davis, *Utamaro and the Spectacle of Beauty* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
- 13 On the historical evolution of the Yamanba, see Noriko T. Reider, "Yamauba: Representation of the Japanese Mountain Witch in the Muromachi and Edo Periods," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2:2 (2005), pages 239–64.
- 14 On Kintarō and the Yamanba, see also Torii Fumiko, *Kintarō no tanjō* (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2002).
- 15 Hayashi, "Jisaku kaisetsu," in *Suichōka: Hayashi Seiichi gekiga sakuhinshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Hokutō shobō, 1976), pages 184–5.
- 16 Hayashi, "Tooi ashita e no ehon," *Gendai shi techō* (August 1971), reprinted in *Hayashi Seiichi sakuhinshū*, page 247.
- 17 Hayashi, "Kiren-uta," *Firumu*, supplemental issue (November 15, 1971), reprinted in *Hayashi Seiichi sakuhinshū*, page 250.

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