

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto

About the Author

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto was born in Osaka, Japan in 1959 and grew up mostly in Hiroshima. Although he was writing poetry in his teens, it was paradoxically only after he moved to Philadelphia in 1986 as a business expatriate and immersed himself in the English language environment that Yasuhiro started fully engaging himself with writing poetry in his native Japanese language.

His first collection of poetry *A Laughing Bug* (『笑うバグ』1991), based partly on his learnings in MBA program at University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School, dealt with financial and accounting theories as a framework for his portrait of the Japanese society in the post-cold war, bubble-economy era. So far, he has published 11 collections, each with a varying subject such as mid-life crisis (*The World Congress of Middle Aged*, 『世界中年会議』 Yamamoto Kenichi Award 2002), childhood memories through popular Manga characters (*Golden Hour*, 『ゴールデンアワー』 2004), and the marriage life (*My Wife's Starboard*, 『妻の右舷』 2006).

Dynamic, and often conflicting, relationship between poetry and living is another theme which Yasuhiro pursues through his writing, sometimes alone (*Afternoon of Forbidden Words*, 『噤みの午後』 Hagiwara Sakutarō Award 2003), and sometimes in collaboration with other poets (*Poetry vs Living*, co-authored with Masayo Koike, 『対詩・詩と生活』 2005, and *The Muddy Calendar*, co-authored with Inuo Taguchi, 『泥の暦』 2008).

In recent years, Yasuhiro explored the relationship among consciousness, language, and poetry, through the linguistically experimental poems as seen in *Hijacking Logos* (『言語ジャック』2010), and *Prisoner of Japanese* (『日本語の虜囚』 Ayukawa Nobuo Award 2012).

His latest publication is *Modern Japan Poetry Journal* (『現代ニッポン詩(うた)日記』 2015), which includes the poems published in the Japanese newspapers over the past 10 years dealing with the everyday news topics with short essays, and *The Trilingual Renshi*, 36 linked

poems in each mother language of Kim Hyesoon from Korea, Ming Di from China, and Shuntaro Tanikawa and Yasuhiro from Japan.

While his own poems have been translated into more than 20 languages, including book publication in English (*Family Room* by Vagabond Press, Australia), Yasuhiro himself translates works of numerous foreign poets, both such classic figures as Li Po, Dante, Rilke, and Emily Dickinson, and the contemporary poets into Japanese. His translation of *Kid* by Simon Armitage (with co-translator Nobuaki Tochigi) was published in Japan in 2008. The other translation works will be published later this year.

Yasuhiro is also active in the areas of story, novel, essay and literary criticism. In 2012, Yasuhiro published *Shuntarology* 『谷川俊太郎学』, a thesis on the poetics of Shuntaro Tanikawa. Earlier this year, his first novel *The Fake Poet* 『偽詩人の世にも奇妙な栄光』 and the collected essays *To Dear Poets!* 『詩人たちよ！』 were published simultaneously.

Since 2006, Yasuhiro has been Japanese national editor of *Poetry International Rotterdam* (<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/>), introducing contemporary Japanese poetry through English translations. Since 2008, he has also been on the editorial board of a poetry magazine *Beagle* in Japan.

Yasuhiro has been away from Japan since 1986 and living in Munich, Germany for the past 21 years.