



Fallen Words

Yoshihiro Tatsumi

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A NEW COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM THE FOREFATHER OF THE JAPANESE LITERARY COMICS MOVEMENT

In *Fallen Words*, Yoshihiro Tatsumi takes up the oral tradition of *rakugo* and breathes new life into it by shifting the format from spoken word to manga. Each of the eight stories in the collection is lifted from the Edo-era Japanese storytelling form. As Tatsumi notes in the afterword, the world of *rakugo*, filled with mystery, emotion, revenge, hope, and, of course, love, overlaps perfectly with the world of *Gekiga* that he has spent the better part of his life developing.

These slice-of-life stories resonate with modern readers thanks to their comedic elements and familiarity with human idiosyncrasies. In one, a father finds his son too bookish and arranges for two workers to take the young man to a brothel on the pretext of visiting a new shrine. In another particularly beloved *rakugo* tale, a married man falls in love with a prostitute. When his wife finds out, she is enraged and sets a curse on the other woman. The prostitute responds by cursing the wife, and the two escalate in a spiral of voodoo doll cursing. Soon both are dead, but even death can't extinguish their jealousy.

Tatsumi's love of wordplay shines through in the telling of these whimsical stories, and yet he still offers timeless insight into human nature.

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