

MINOR INTIMACIES OF JAPANESE LITERATURE: CALLING OUT INTO THE WORLD IN TIMES OF TRAUMA

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SPECULATIVE JAPANOPHONE FICTION LECTURE SERIES

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In this talk, I perform queer readings of the everyday in fiction by Japanese authors Kawakami Hiromi and Ekuni Kaori, drawing out representations of intimacy built on smallness, distance, and the mundane, which are often tinged with loneliness and grief. My project of queer readings began years ago, but what does it mean in the world of 2021? I reflect on the experience of living with these texts and my own readings, through precarious employment; teaching in spaces of translation in the United States, Japan, and Hong Kong; transformations in my own awareness as a feminist/queer studies scholar; and Black Lives Matter, anti-Asian racism, and political upheaval during the pandemic. Specifically, I illustrate how—in a callous world scarred by racism, xenophobia, misogyny, and imperialism—minor intimacies of Japanese literature still offer us valuable forms of queer feminist love and solidarity.

This talk is sponsored by the Department of Literature at UC San Diego