

READ GLOBAL BOOK GROUP

Tokyo Ueno Station by Miri Yū

Questions

1. Promotional descriptions talk about how Kazu's life parallels the emperor's. How are they alike? Do you think the emphasis is valid?
2. From rain in the park to the tsunami, how does Yu use the symbol/theme of water in the book?
3. What did you think of the language and the author's writing style? Do you think Morgan Giles' translation affected the book?
4. Yu herself is considered an outsider, a Zainichi (Korean-Japanese) who does not have citizenship despite the fact that she was born and raised in Japan. What are the parallels with the lives of the Pure Land followers who emigrated to Soma? Of people without homes?
5. How do Setsuko, Shige, Junko, and Mari figure in Kazu life? What do you think of his ability to connect with people?
6. What is the symbolism of setting the story by a train station? What else about the place has meaning for Kazu?
7. What do you think of the portrayal of the afterlife?
8. What are some of the differences between the rural lives of the people in Soma and the metropolitan lives of people in Tokyo?
9. Kazu talks about earthquakes and tsunamis and he hears about war from Shige. What other tragedies are in the book?
10. Yu has said that she wants to give voice to the voiceless. Do you think she succeeds?

Notes

Hisaki, Amano. (2021, April 9). "Tokyo Ueno Station": A Tale from the Soul for Those Who Do Not Belong. Nippon.com. ["https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/bg900255/](https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/bg900255/)

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