

OH!

A MYSTERY OF *MONO NO AWARE*

Zack Hara is dead inside, devoid of passion, hate, love, any sustained emotion. The twenty-something technical writer trudges through each day in LA like a zombie, until he leaves his job, part-time lover, and antique Chevy pickup truck to travel to Japan. There, searching for an emotional life, Zack becomes entwined with a tragic poet, a sensual but disillusioned woman, and young people who form suicide clubs—all propelling him down a dangerous path.



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TODD SHIMODA, of Hawaii, has published two popular novels that deal with Japan and Japanese themes: *365 Views of Mt. Fuji* (Stone Bridge Press) and *The Fourth Treasure* (Nan Talese/Doubleday). The books have been translated into six languages with over one hundred thousand copies printed worldwide. *The Fourth Treasure* was listed as a 2002 Notable Book by the Kiriyama Prize.

LINDA SHIMODA is an accomplished artist, illustrator, and book designer. She is also the curator of the Kaua'i Museum in Hawaii. Her illustrations and artwork have appeared in both of husband Todd Shimoda's first two novels. In *Oh!*, her artwork offers clues to the fate of the novel's protagonist, Zack Hara.

"The mysterious tension between material things and emotional attachment to them oscillates throughout Japanese history and culture. With a keen and sympathetic eye, Todd Shimoda explores an individual's dangerous quest to waken his numb soul to this exquisite reverberation. As in Kawabata Yasunari's famous novella, The Master of Go, the lacrimae rerum of a dying tradition become a river, inexorably flowing toward the ocean of death. Fascinated, the reader cannot help but follow the flow."

—LIZA DALBY, author of *The Tale of Murasaki and Geisha*

"Shimoda's novel unravels like a Japanese scroll—one cannot put it down until the last scene comes into full view and, with it, the realization that the realm of feelings (mono no aware) is far from being an innocent enterprise; it carries risks that one must be ready to pay in order to fully understand. This is a brilliant novel—it makes the reader feel the pleasure of thinking."

—MICHAEL F. MARRA, professor of Japanese literature, UCLA

"Just as the nourishment, subtle richness, and joys of food are being rediscovered by the 'slow food' movement, so too, if I can coin a phrase, Oh! is a slow read, truly a delicious, complexly flavored, and integrated novel."

—WILLIAM POY LEE, author of *The Eighth Promise*

"This is the most compelling and complete account I have read of the exploration into the sudden, intense moment of awareness; the inherent state of sadness of life; the moments which, as Shimoda's character explains, makes us gasp 'oh!' with heightened awareness and wistfulness."

—LAURA PRITCHETT, author of *Sky Bridge and Hell's Bottom, Colorado*

"Shimoda's multilayered Oh! shimmers with verve and nerve."

—LEZA LOWITZ, author of *Green Tea to Go: Stories from Tokyo*

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