

BIG IN JAPAN | A GHOST STORY

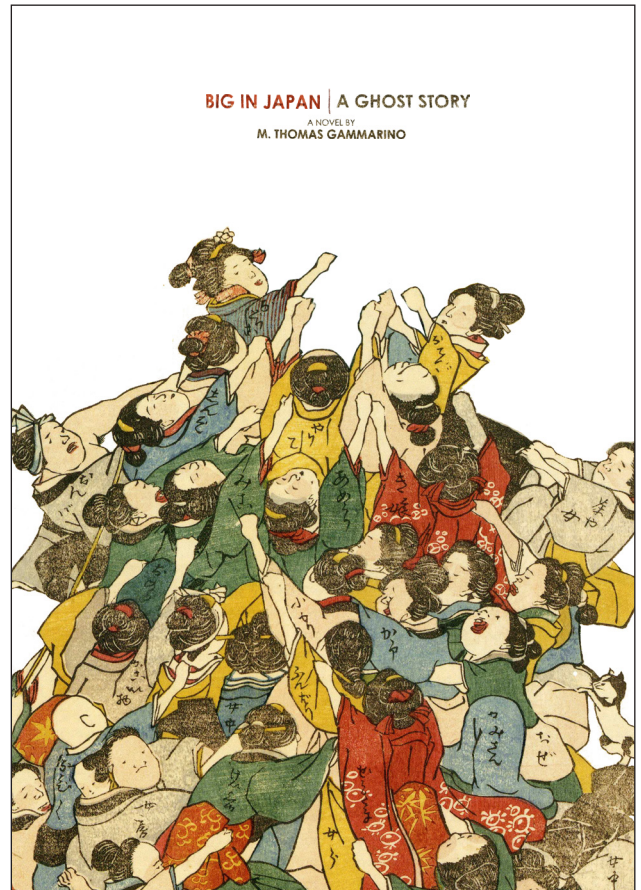
A NOVEL BY
M. THOMAS GAMMARINO

While playing to lackluster crowds in their hometown of Philadelphia, progressive rock band Agenbite clings to the snowballing half-truth that they're doing better in Japan. When their producer agrees to send them on a shoestring tour of that country, however, they're swiftly forced to give up their illusions and return Stateside.

All but one of them, that is.

Brain Tedesco, the band's haunted chief composer, has fallen in love with a part-time sex worker—the first woman ever to have physically touched him—and he's not going anywhere. What ensues is a voyage-into-hell-cum-bildungsroman in which Brain must navigate the borderlands between fantasy and reality, past and present, sex and death. At the same time he tries to satisfy the hungry ghosts of his own exacting personality while maintaining sanity in a world where he can't even read a train schedule, and where the band he created is going on to unfathomable success without him.

Big in Japan is both riotously serious and deadly funny. The heir to tragicomic novelists like Philip Roth and Norman Mailer, Gammarino creates a voice capacious enough to contain the highest of the high and the lowest of the low. Its linguistic fireworks and formal experimentation, and its refusal to avert its gaze from the most sordid aspects of the human animal while holding out the possibility of existential redemption make this a sparkling debut novel.



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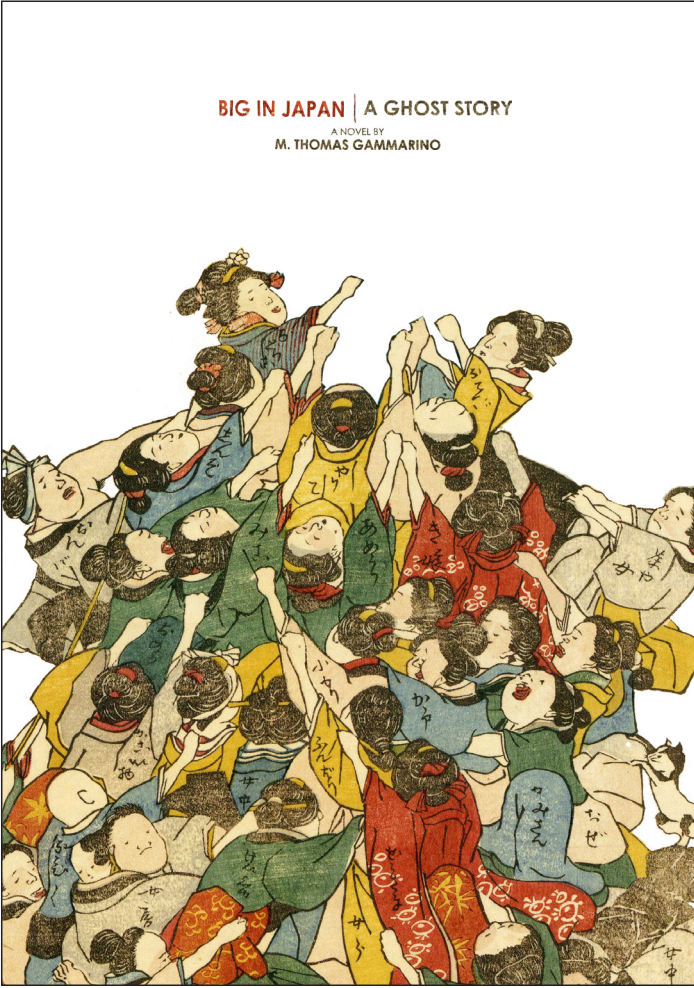
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M. THOMAS GAMMARINO has an MFA in creative writing from the New School and is pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the University of Hawaii. In 2000-01, he was a Fulbright Fellow in creative writing at Kyoto's Doshisha University. Some of his recent fiction and essays have appeared in *The New York Tyrant*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Word Riot* and *Noö Journal*, and his story "The Fridge" was selected for inclusion in Dzanc Books' *Best of the Web 2009* anthology. This is his first novel.



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