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Oh!: A mystery of 'mono no aware'

Todd Shimoda

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Oh!: A mystery of 'mono no aware' Todd Shimoda
***Oh!* was selected for National Public Radio's summer reading list of 2009. NPR reviewer Lucia Silva called it "a triumphant kick in the pants for anyone who doubts the future of paper-and-ink books."**

“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: A Novel* and *Geisha*

Oh! is a hybrid novel, with nonfiction and artwork mixed in. The main storyline follows Zack Hara, a young Japanese American searching for an emotional life while traveling in Japan. Zack finds an ally in a professor and underground poet who introduces him to the concept of *mono no aware*, roughly translated as the emotive essence of things, or the sadness in beauty. The professor, grieving for a missing daughter, assigns Zack a set of mysterious tasks. Zack’s search for self-discovery turns into a search for the professor’s missing daughter, and draws him into the tragic phenomenon of suicide clubs.

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