



STEVEN (takatsu) K T . L E E

SKILLS & SOFTWARE

- >> MS Office, Sketch InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, iMovie, Premiere, Calibre, GarageBand, Logic
- >> HTML/CSS, PHP/MySQL, JavaScript, Wordpress CMS
- >> Hootsuite, Buffer, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and other Social Media Marketing and unconventional forward-thinking strategies
- >> Press Release, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Web Content, Blog Article Writing; Conceptual, Thematic, Structural, and Technical Editing

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PROFILE

- >> Featured Writer with 20,000+ followers, 1 million+ reads, #1 Science-Fiction ranking on Wattpad (out of 47 million users)
- >> Pioneered the English Cell Phone Novel and online writing/reading community on Textnovel with over 70,000 users and 200,000 reads
- >> Publications: *Aozora* (EP, 2012), *Espresso Love* (serial, Wattpad 2014), *Secondhand Memories* (Print, eBook, Sakura Publishing 2015), *Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams* (Print, eBook, Inspiritus Press 2016)
- >> 2016 York University Babs Burggraf Award (\$2500, "The Elephant Girl" Short Story), 2014 York University Stanley Fefferman Prize, 2014 Watty's Award, 2009 Textnovel Reader's Choice Award, 2009 Textnovel Editor's Choice Award
- >> Founder & Coordinator of The Literary Fiction Network and York University Crossroads Literary & Reading Festival
- >> Interviewed by Reddit Co-Founder, Alex Ohanian on The Verge, CBC, womenwriteaboutcomics, and other media features
- >> VIP Guest Speaker on Fan Expo Digital Storytelling Panel 2015, Host and Presenter for Pages Unbound Literary Festival Transcending Print Workshop
- >> AM1430 Fairchild Radio New Rising Star 2013 2nd Place Trophy Winner ("Ashita No Yume" Original Song Performance)
- >> Social Media Stats: 20,000+ Wattpad Followers (Wattpad.com/Takatsu), 3,100 Facebook Page Likes, 1400 Twitter Followers, 2700 Instagram Followers, 480 Youtube Subscribers

www.stakatsu.com

taka@stakatsu.com

Toronto, ON, CANADA

Award-winning Author of Literary Fiction; Pioneer of English Cell Phone Novels; Recording and Performing Musician; Graphic, Web and Product Designer; Guest Speaker and Teacher; Curator and Editor; Social Media and Transmedia Marketer; Events Coordinator

EDUCATION

York University - 2010-2016

B. A. English and Creative Writing, Double Major, Honours
Golden Key International Honours Society since 2015

Seneca College - 2009

Web Masters Design and Development Certificate

Unionville High School - 2003-2007

Arts York Visual Arts Graduate, Honours

WORK EXPERIENCE

Tami Smart City Technologies:

Head of Marketing & Product Design - 2016-Present

- >> Envision, conceptualize, translate, plan and execute company and product branding and visions
- >> Responsible for project management and liaising between investors, designers, development teams
- >> Produce website, graphics, marketing material, iOS and Android UI/UX app design
- >> Develop marketing strategies including beta tests, exclusive core users, email lists, social media campaigns, multimedia productions and media coverage

Inspiritus Press & The Literary Fiction Network:

Coordinator & Creative Designer - 2015-Present

- >> Manage staff team and authors; curate and edit literary works
- >> Create marketing plans, implement digital media strategies and organize events
- >> Design, develop, create content and branding for web, print, publicity and social media publications
- >> Communicate with other organizations such as intellectual communities, arts collectives, education institutions, media channels, venues, literary magazines, associations, authors and more

Agape Charis Learning Center:

Public Speaking & Writing Teacher - 2015

- >> Prepared and taught lessons and materials including Youtube, Wattpad and other multimedia technology, Edmodo online social classroom platform, and implemented student-led programming such as "Inspiration of the Week" for three classes of students aged 10-16

EDge Interactive Inc:

Web & Graphic Designer - 2011-2012

- >> Conceptualize, collaborate and produce web designs, CMS themes, branding, logos, print material, mobile app and UI skins, develop back end admin panel system, database management, HTML email campaigns, web content according to needs of the client and project
- >> Clients include: *SchoolFinder.com*, *ScholarshipsCanada.com*, *StudyinCanada.com*, *University of Waterloo*, *University of Victoria*, *Bishop's University*, *Leeds Metropolitan University* and more



STEVEN (takatsu) K T . L E E

CONNECTIONS

www.stakatsu.com

www.stevenklee.com
Last Updated 2013

Writing:
wattpad.com/takatsu
writersunion.ca/member/takatsu
goodreads.com/takatsu

Social Media:
facebook.com/takawrites
twitter.com/takawrites
instagram.com/takawrites
youtube.com/stakatsu

Espresso Love:
espressolove.tk

Secondhand Memories:
secondhandmemories.net

Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams:
inspiritupress.com/OFCD

REFERENCES

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Anita Fung
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charisagape@yahoo.ca

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Award-winning Author of Literary Fiction; Pioneer of English Cell Phone Novels; Recording and Performing Musician; Graphic, Web and Product Designer; Guest Speaker and Teacher; Curator and Editor; Social Media and Transmedia Marketer; Events Coordinator

WORK EXPERIENCE

Freelance Multimedia, Graphic and Web Designer - 2009-2014

>> In addition to the similar Web and Graphic Design responsibilities above: outsourcing, coordinating, producing video and film for clients; providing illustrations, paintings and artwork in both digital and traditional mediums

>> Clients include: *bFree iPhone Cases*, *COMEX Media*, *Ambassador's For Christ in Canada*, *The Queensbridge Mill Designs and Collections*, *Ubisu Urban Design*, *Ripplepak*, *Bridle Trail Baptist Church*, *Textnovel*, *Agape Charis Learning Center* and others

York Region District School Board:

Tutor in the Classroom, New Media Teacher - 2010

>> Prepared, planned and taught lessons and materials for elementary school classes empowering students with technology on Mac and Windows, storyboarding, video recording, iMovie editing

Agape Charis Learning Center:

Summer Camp Coordinator - 2008-2012

>> Recruited, trained and coordinated staff in planning and teaching programs including Arts & Crafts, Sports, Martial Arts, Science, Field Trips, and more

>> Created promotional and marketing material for advertising

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

York University Crossroads Literary & Reading Festival - 2016-Present

>> Founded and coordinate staff team, guests and volunteers, including The Writers' Union of Canada, Word on the Street, Wattpad, *Brick Literary Journal*, *Existere Journal*, *untethered* magazine, Dumagrad Books and more

>> Design marketing and promotional content for digital and print media

York University YU Start: Academic Student Orientation Facilitator - 2014

>> Represented Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and coordinated online Moodle forum university orientation course and presented academic information on English, Professional Writing and Creative Writing programs to fifty freshman students in classroom environment

Nico Nico Douga Convention: Culture Japan Itasha Exhibit Assistant - 2012

>> Worked with world renown Danny Choo and his associates in producing company displays at the Itasha anime decorated car exhibit and promoting the brand to visitors and media personnel at the Makuhari Messe Convention Center in Yokohama, Japan

York University Japanese International Students' Association

Vice President External Representative - 2010-2011

>> Organized and facilitated campus and off-campus events by liaising with association committee members, guests and Japanese cultural organizations to promote Japanese cultural exchange and academic information

Crossroads

YORKU

the new era of
publishing & literature
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LITERARY

FRIDAY
JAN 27

& READING

FESTIVAL

4:30-7:30PM
VANIER 001
RENAISSANCE HALL



Mary W. Walters
National Advocate
at the Writers' Union



Takatsu
Inspiritus Press & English
Cellphone Novel Pioneer



B.W. Powe
Professor at York U
English Department



Patricia Keeney
Professor at York U
Creative Writing Faculty



Nick Uskoski
Wattpad Staff
York U Alumni



Justin Lauzon
Founder of Lexical,
Marketing at WOTS



David Hull
Publisher & Founder
of Dumagrad Books



Evan Hoskins
Existere Editor & Brick
Literary Journal Intern

Come learn about the industry & the new emerging scene! Connecting students, alumni, faculty, industry & technology. Join us for readings, speakers, networking, books, signings, food & drinks. Hosted by YU Write, in conjunction with YU Creative Writing Department. Guests from:



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MARKETING & GROWTH LEAD
A lover of art, design, music & literature

Toronto, Canada

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@StevenTakatsu

The crowd is so passionately singing "Wherever You Are" right now, we're all probably tearing up... Such a beautiful...

63 41

@StevenTakatsu

The crowd is so passionately singing "Wherever You Are" right now, we're all probably tearing up... Such a beautiful...

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The crowd is so passionately singing "Wherever You Are" right now, we're all probably tearing up... Such a beautiful scene.

@StevenTakatsu

14 min ago

63 41

Tags: OOR One Ok Rock Rock Japanese Concert ...

Leave a Comment

@Kelsey_Davis 2 min ago

Right here with you... This band is the best. So many feels! This song is what got me through college.

@EsotericLightning 3 min ago

Anyone else have memories connected to this song? Let's get together to jam afterwards...

@SaraKiyosaki 7 min ago

You're singing out of tune, jk. Glad they came to Toronto, we've been waiting for them forever.

NEW BLIP

Choose Topic:

SOCIAL

The crowd is so passionately singing "Wherever You Are" right now, we're all probably tearing up... Such a beautiful scene.

121/250

Tags: Social, OOR, One Ok Rock, Rock, Japanese, Concert

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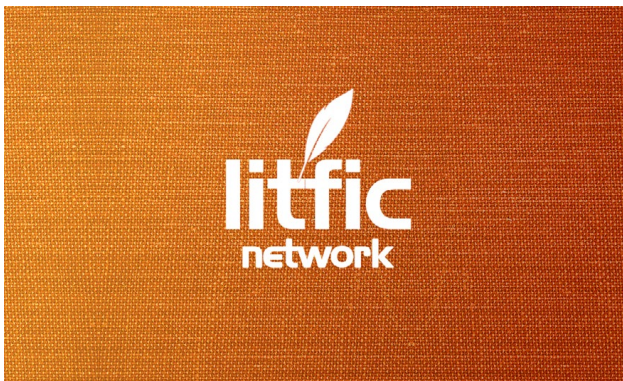
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the literary fiction network

wattpad

litfic.net
connect@litfic.net

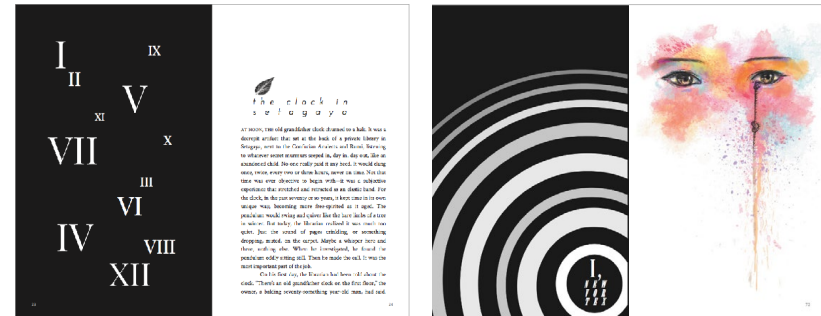
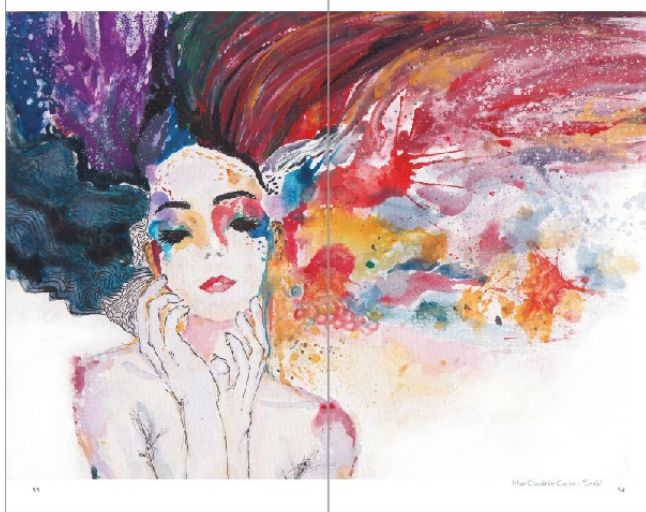
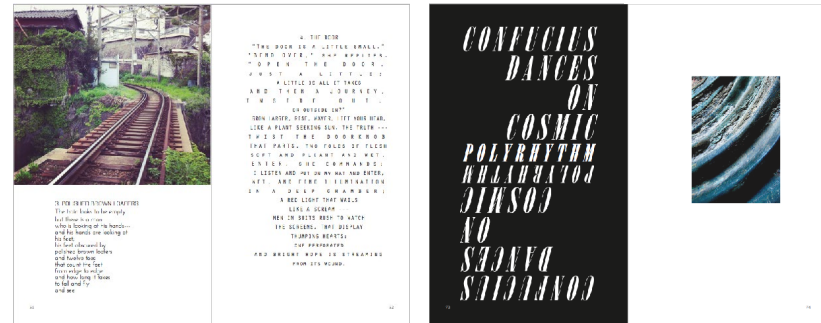
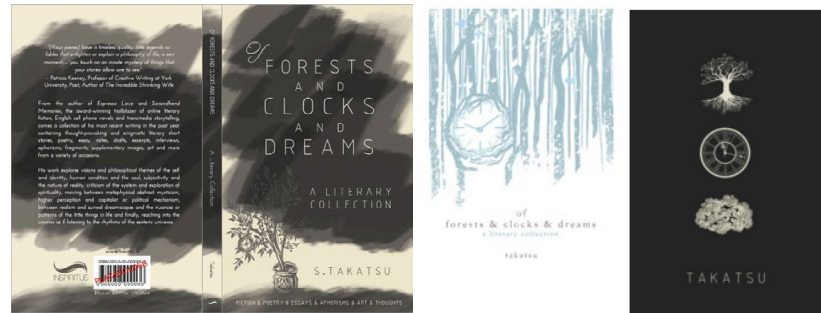
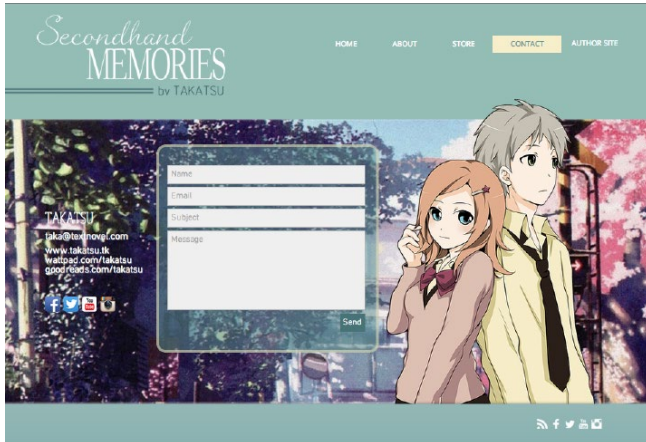
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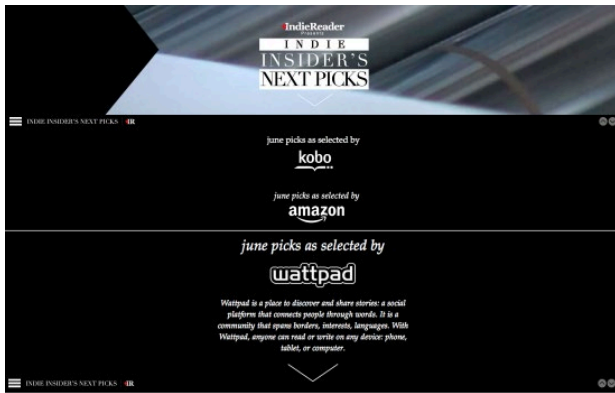
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EspressoLove: A Novel by Takatsu

Serialized novel "Secondhand Memories" offers comic, anime, and sci-fi influences to the readers of 18-25. This plot line is a heartwarming love story. The author, Takatsu, brings the Japanese cultural phenomenon of the cell phone novel into the English speaking world. Takatsu is a pioneer of the cell phone novel and a devoted fan of anime, manga, and Japanese literature. He is a multi-talented author, that includes poetry and prose. He is also a fan of the Japanese novel, and he has been reading it since he was a child. He has been reading it since he was a child. He has been reading it since he was a child.

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Book Giveaway For Secondhand Memories



Secondhand Memories
by Takatsu (Goodreads Author)
Release date: Feb 14, 2015
Originally serialized and made popular online in 2008 (Textnovel), Secondhand Memories pioneered the Japanese cell phone novel phenomenon in the English...

Winners have been selected
Availability:
2 copies available, 3330 people requesting
Giveaway dates:
Jan 08 - Feb 20, 2015
Countries available:
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Secondhand MEMORIES x society6
by TAKATSU



Join Shizuka's Revolution!
Strong, smart, and kind.

"Company and Dystopia under a veil of sweetness and love"

"Diabetes in a cup. Like a bawlsie latte in a cup."

"Tadao like Christmas."

Original: Tall Creamy Chai Tea Latte, Soy, Cane Whip
ESP. Version: Tall Creamy Chai Tea Latte w/ a shot of Espresso, Soy Cane Whip

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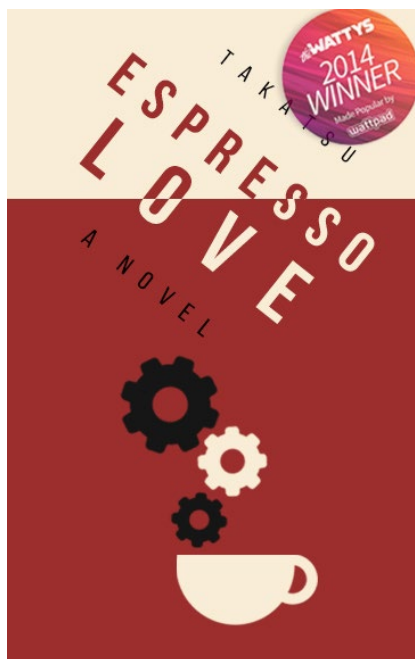
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President's Creative Writing Awards winners honoured for poetry, fiction, screen writing and more

Creative Writing Award winners with York President & Vice-Chancellor Mandour Stoukri, Creative Writing Program Coordinator B. W. Pown, and LAAPS Dean Marlin Singer



espresso love: an award-winning dystopian, magical realism & literary novel. Set in Tokyo, where the System drains thoughts, memories, emotions, a literature student meets a strange psychic girl in a coffee shop and they embark on a search for soul, for love, for meaning, and an escape from mindless faceless agents, civil unrest, dream worlds and reality itself.



Espresso Love by Takatsu won the Watty's Award 2014, reached #1 in the Science Fiction category, 1 million reads and over 20,000 followers on Wattpad.com, a serialized reading and writing platform, and is acclaimed by authors, professors and young readers internationally.

In *Espresso Love*, all human beings are unknowingly connected to the Collective, and the System drains identity, thought, memories, and emotions as Intellectual Property and Free Energy. All are condemned to expire and become mindless, faceless Images. When literature student and intellectual anomaly, NAOKI MAEDA, meets a strange psychic girl in a coffee shop over an unsettling conversation,

his life is jolted out of its complacency and mundane structure. Against his will, she guides him on a convoluted paranoid escapade against the urban labyrinth of the city, the oppressive System, its agents, and civil unrest to recover his memories - but he discovers she may be hiding the truth of her identity. Through disembodied characters, discussions of coffee and philosophy, and surreal dream worlds, soon, he begins to question reality and his past - if it is merely his own subjective perception and his own making. Ultimately, there seems to be no way to escape the all-encompassing System or the confines of his own mind, and he may lose her, but perhaps there is yet a greater understanding of himself, of love, and of the universe.

Espresso Love stands for three elements in the story: ESP, coffee and a higher spiritual connection between people - Love. "Espresso Love" attempts to examine the human condition, pop culture, capitalist and consumer culture, and the socio-political system.

Espresso Love is currently seeking literary agent representation and a publishing home.

"Struck me to the very core of my being."

"Like a seven course meal full of spice and illumination... One does not listen to a classical piece to get to its ending. No. It is the ride, the moment by moment...a genuine Masamune among stories." - **ghosty**, author

"It was both personable and philosophical. A rare breed of good story and thought provoking ideas... A virtual standing ovation would not be enough to encapsulate the absolute awe I have of you and love I have for your work." - **WindAndFlame**

"The world Takatsu has created opens to the deeper awareness of another, the draw of another." - **Mary L Tabor**, Wattpad and published award-winning author, essayist, professor

"The story speaks profoundly to the modern-day reader. Espresso Love is the perfect combination of the old and the new, an analysis of the human condition in today's inhuman living conditions..." - **NeonNebulae**, Wattpad author, poet

"This novel has definitely taught me alot about myself, and the world around me. That we are apart of something much greater than ourselves...I'm looking at life from a new perspective, a brighter one." - **JaiCampbell9**

"Espresso Love is highly intelligent and worthwhile reading... profound and multi-layered." - **Tantra Bensko**, published award-winning author, UCLA professor

"I am awestruck at the philosophical stance of your writing. Your writing is akin to that of Murakami in its surrealist execution." - **ShaneOltinir**

"I have been turned to a whole new way of thinking because of you." - **KlausAnwhistle**

"It's not a regular thing to find a piece of work that oozes sophistication and embodies literature and art." - **LeftToFly**

"Takatsu weaves themes of systematization with love and self discovery into such delicate balance that everything on a page cannot be digested without swooning over the beautiful diction and prose." - **Junn Park**, fabrication, cell phone novelist

"Very interesting concept of reality...Thought provoking." - **hsavage**

"Offers acute, almost painful observations of the minutiae of life, if life took place in a Murakami snow-globe." - **IndieReader Insiders**

"Vapoury style that seems to hover off world at times... haunting and strange (which is good)...sense of terror in the core...You're on to something different, striking." - **B.W. Powe**, York University Professor of English, award-winning author, poet, philosopher



about the author

Takatsu, known as a passionate trailblazer of online literature and transmedia storytelling, is an award-winning writer of literary fiction, Wattpad star and featured author of 20,000 followers, poet, philosopher, musician, designer, and guest speaker from Toronto.

In 2008, through coming-of-age story, Textnovel Reader's Choice, *Secondhand Memories* (Sakura Publishing 2015), he pioneered the Japanese "cell phone novel" phenomenon in the English-speaking world. In 2014, his acclaimed dystopian magical realist novel, *Espresso Love* ranked #1 for Sci-Fi, won a Watty's Award and reached 1 million reads. Inspiritus Press published his visionary avant-garde literary and art collection, *Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams*, in 2016, and he received the Babs Burggraf Award of \$2500 for his short story "The Elephant Girl".

He believes in inspiring others, speaking to the heart, awakening souls and helping build communities that shine and continues to coordinate community and innovation through Inspiritus Press, the Wattpad Literary Fiction Network, the Cell Phone Novel movement and social marketing initiatives. He is influenced by Japanese entertainment, pop culture and names such as Murakami, Borges, Orwell, Ruth Ozeki, Yann Martel, DeLillo, Kafka, Raymond Carver, Graham Hancock, Baudrillard, Jung, McLuhan, Hegel, and others.

"Takatsu is a fascinating writer, musician and illustrator and is at the forefront of transmedia storytelling." - **Rowena Wiseman**, Author of *Searching for Von Honningsbergs, The Replacement Wife, Bequest, Silver*

"[His pieces] have a timeless quality... that enlighten or explain a philosophy of life, a zen moment... [and] touch on an innate mystery of things that allow one to see." - **Patricia Keeney**, York University Creative Writing Professor, Award-winning Poet, Critic, Author of *One Man Dancing* and more.

"Amazing how well you implement the first-person point of view... Hackneyed and cliché, some have said, but there's just something about good writers and first person novels. You are definitely in one of them. Your voice really comes through... I would have to say that not all first-person novels come through as clean as yours does. Simply amazing." - **Diogenes Marx**, Textnovel critic

"Takatsu always seems to be breaking the rules and combining various mediums of art... The pioneer of English Cell Phone Novels has continued to approach writing—and art as a whole—in different ways...A great glimpse into what the future of the written word—and art as a whole—can be." - **C.J. Garrett**, Author of *Memoirs of a Zygote*

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wattpad.com/takatsu
goodreads.com/takatsu
facebook.com/takawrites
twitter.com/takawrites
instagram.com/takawrites
youtube.com/stakatsu

>> Publications: *Aozora* (EP, 2012), *Espresso Love* (serial, Wattpad 2014), *Secondhand Memories* (Print, eBook, Sakura Publishing 2015), *Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams* (Print, eBook, Inspiritus Press 2016)

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>> Interviewed by Reddit Co-Founder, Alex Ohanian on The Verge and many other media features

>> Guest Speaker on Fan Expo Digital Storytelling Panel 2015, Host and Presenter for Pages Unbound Literary Festival Transcending Print Workshop

>> Social Media Stats: 20,000+ Wattpad Followers (Wattpad.com/Takatsu), 3,100+ Facebook Page Likes, 1300+ Twitter Followers, 2500+ Instagram Followers, 450+ Youtube Subscribers



from award-winning author, an avant-garde collection fusing literature, art & philosophy

Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams by Takatsu—the cross-disciplinary multimedia artist and pioneer of English cell phone novels—crystallizes surreal and visionary fragments, moments, imaginings and perceptions in literary short stories, poetry, aphorisms, essay, excerpts, artwork, photography, typography and design. The book will be officially released by Inspiritus Press on May 28th, 2016 as the trailblazing title of a new unconventional approach to publishing.

His work explores the nature of reality and the crisis of identity, human consciousness, and imagination stunted by subjectivity, culture, and constructs of a tumultuous simultaneous digital age, and invokes spiritual mysticism and modern metaphysical philosophy in a search for dreams, the soul and beyond. Whether in his enigmatic aphorisms, haiku-esque poetry, or shorts that blur the lines between dream and wakefulness, through strange conversations, umbrellas, a talking bird, a girl with a top hat, grandfather clocks, a transfigured stone, a missing archaeologist, bowls of rice, white elephants, a man with twelve toes and more, Takatsu continues to open the window of perception and enlighten readers around the globe.

The collection includes short quotes and excerpts of his acclaimed genre-bending dystopian magical realism literary novel, *Espresso Love*: the unedited manuscript on Wattpad.com that had gained a worldwide readership of over 950,000, winner of a Watty's Award 2014, ranking #1, and reviewed by professors, editors, authors and fans of all ages. His writing continues to spearhead the university-adult literary fiction and philosophy frontlines on the writing and reading platform of over 40 million unique users per month.

The twenty-five year-old author with 20,000 followers online lives in Toronto and is a musician, guest speaker, panelist, and writing teacher. Takatsu will participate in upcoming events and presentations, sharing about digital literature, multimedia art, cell phone novels, and the new book. Advance and review copies are currently available.


INSPIRITUS PRESS
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"[His stories] have a timeless quality, little legends or fables that enlighten or explain a philosophy of life, a zen moment... [they] touch on an innate mystery of things that allow one to see."

Patricia Keeney, York University Creative Writing Professor, Award-winning Poet, Critic and Author of *One Man Dancing*

"A thought provoking work that will leave the reader questioning the very existence around them... [Takatsu] always seems to be breaking the rules and combining various mediums of art... The pioneer of English Cell Phone Novels has continued to approach writing—and art as a whole—in different ways, breaking and manipulating constructs... A great glimpse into what the future of the written word—and art as a whole—can be."

C. J. Garrett, Author of *Memoirs of a Zygote (Trapped in a Human's Body)*

"Takatsu is a fascinating writer, musician and illustrator and is at the forefront of transmedia storytelling."

Rowena Wiseman, Author of *Searching for Von Honningsbergs, The Replacement Wife, Bequest, Silver.*

"I am awestruck at the philosophical stance of your writing. Your writing is akin to that of Murakami in its surrealist execution."

Shane Oltingir, Wattpad Reader

OF FORESTS AND CLOCKS AND DREAMS by Takatsu Release: May 28, 2016

Paperback | 240 pg | 56 pg art/photo/design | 5" x 8" | Advance Copies Available
Colour ISBN: 978-0-9949746-0-0 | B&W: 978-0-9949746-1-7 | eBook: 978-0-9949746-2-4

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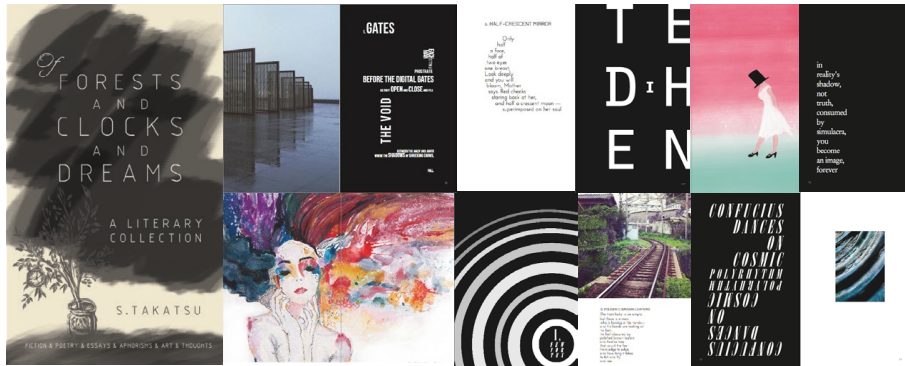
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of forests and clocks and dreams

OF FORESTS AND CLOCKS AND DREAMS by Takatsu Release: May 28, 2016
Paperback | 240 pg | 56 pg art/photo/design | 5" x 8" | Advance Copies Available
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about the author

Takatsu, known as a passionate trailblazer of online literature and transmedia storytelling, is an award-winning writer of literary fiction, featured Wattpad author of 20,000 followers, poet, philosopher, musician, designer, guest speaker and Literature student from Toronto.

In 2008, through coming-of-age story, 2009 Textnovel Reader's Choice and Editor's Choice Award winning *Secondhand Memories* (Sakura Publishing 2015), he pioneered the Japanese "cell phone novel" phenomenon in the English-speaking world, marking a new online literary movement globally with a remarkably unique serialized fusion of haiku-like poetic technique, visual text flow, and micro-prose storytelling. In 2014, his critically acclaimed dystopian magical realism philosophical literary novel, *Espresso Love* ranked #1 for Sci-Fi, won the Watty's Award and reached 950,000 reads online. *Of Forests and Clocks and Dreams*, a visionary post-modern collection of short stories, poetry, essay, aphorism, artwork, design and photography will be published by Inspiritus Press.

He continues to work with Inspiritus Press to envision a cross-disciplinary arts collective and community of avant-garde, thought-provoking, transcendental, experimental, counter culture work, championed by upbeat unconventional grassroots digital strategies, events and multimedia technology. He won York University's Stanley Fefferman Award in 2014 and the Babs Burggraf Award of \$2500 for his short story "The Elephant Girl" in 2016. He is influenced by writers such as Murakami, Borges, Orwell, DeLillo, Kafka, Carver and the ideas of Mumford, Baudrillard, Jung, Wyndham Lewis, McLuhan, Hegel, and Marx.



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the elephant girl

excerpt from *of forests and clocks and dreams* by TAKATSU

I DIDN'T REALLY notice it until I had sat there in the bookstore in Daikanyama, reading, for a good half an hour. It was an ordinary phone, black, touchscreen covered in fingerprints like paint daubs, and a cheap made-in-China plastic case. The case had this strange image of a white elephant. It stood on an island, which I then realized resembled the shell of a turtle: a prophetic reminder of the flat earth and the World Tortoise. Perhaps one day we would fall off the edge of the world. But I looked around and no one was here; I was mostly alone. There was this girl in a grey cardigan with brown hair tied up like a fountain browsing through the popular books section. It couldn't be hers. In her right hand was a large white phone, big enough to be a book itself. Further away, a couple talking and laughing and nodding at one another but maybe not to each other; one carried a volume on civilization by Lewis Mumford and the other, H.D. Every now and then their faces would fade behind the shelves and return washed with yellow ochre glows under ceiling lights. There was no one else as far as I could see. I had deliberately chosen a quiet corner among the philosophical dispositions of Borges, Chomsky and Nietzsche. Around me, the spines of these books like trees and letters dancing with virtuosic synchronicity - strange cryptic runes and ancient chants.

I must have examined the phone case for a long time before I returned to my book. It was about people who never slept and someone who couldn't wake up. I had to wonder what people could possibly do at night when all the trains stop running and each hour seems to wind to a halt, the movements of a sloth. The phone began to ring about five chapters in. It wasn't set on silent mode so an undulating pulse sound resonated through the couch I was sitting on. Someone turned to look, and in return, I turned around as if to say it wasn't my phone. Of course, no one was going to answer and I watched a

string of arbitrary numbers dangle. No name, no caller ID, no real meaning. I debated whether to pick it up or not, but by then the caller had stopped.

The same number called again a few minutes later. In the novel, Komugi, Korogi, Kaoru were sifting through security camera recordings for the man who had beat up a Chinese call girl in the love hotel. I picked up the phone this time.

I didn't say anything and the other end of the line was quiet.

Then, "hello," I said, "this isn't my phone."

A woman's voice spoke. "Hey, I know, it's my phone, I've left it behind—where are you right now? I'm coming right over to get it, as soon as I can. I apologize for the inconvenience but there are a lot of important things in there, so I must get it back, and I can't trust someone else—I mean a guy who answers the call can't be that bad right?—I can pay you for your time if you want, but I'll be there soon."

I sat there and swallowed the mouthful. "Don't worry," I said, "I'm not going anywhere yet. I'm at the Tsutaya bookstore in Daikayama."

"The one fancily designed like a museum or art gallery or something by Klein..."

"Dytham," I said. I happened to know such things.

"Yes, that group in the architectural pitch right? With the lounge and restaurant and everything. Outside, the white walls look like pixelated interlocking optical illusions and are as thick and dense as a bank vault. As if secrets don't go in or come out. You have to dig for things. Nice place."

"Yes, weren't you here before? When are you getting here?"

She paused. Her voice was hushed and quiet, a nice, pleasant voice, soft and soothing to listen to and cultured and intelligent sounding, but rather talkative. I might imagine a woman with a short bob, hair pushed back exposing her ears, glasses, a ball-point pen clicking, and red lipstick. "I don't know for sure," she explained, "because I'm right in the middle of something, but I will be there as soon as possible today."

"Today? There's probably no other option really," I joked.

She didn't seem to take it as a joke. "I know, I know. Just give me some time."

I told her it wasn't a problem.

She hung up after a moment of silence.

I set the phone down, stretched my neck and settled back in my couch.



INSPIRITUS PRESS

OF FORESTS AND CLOCKS AND DREAMS

BY TAKATSU

Release: May 28, 2016

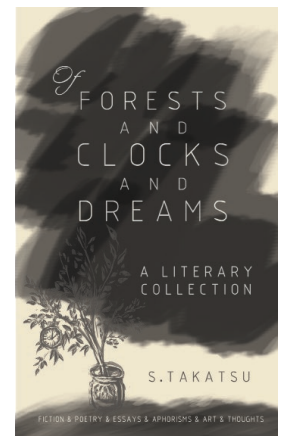
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the elephant girl by TAKATSU

The ambient lighting around descended like oozing warm paint. The couch I had chosen was rust-red and scaly and if I ran my fingernails over it, little strings would pull free. But it was soft and I sank and felt drowsy. You had to dig in this place, she said. That for the most part was true.

During these summer days, I had nothing better to do than to browse for new material like scavenging for bottle caps and tin to sell. It wasn't that I found a particular solace or liberation through the pages, but it was the well-practiced motions that gave me some sort of comfort. Early in the morning, I would find a good book, find something, whether it was an interesting title or the look of it or the smell or the weight, sit there flipping pages, listening to the museum murmurs of people meandering and stopping and thinking (or not thinking). When I felt thirsty or cold, whichever came first, I'd pick up a coffee. Sometimes, it was as if I could just soak in the air-conditioned coffee-stained air, the ambience, the whispers, the smell of the pages, the scent of dead trees and hot ink and laminate. I used to believe in finding illumination in artifacts and the objects and tales I could pick up in my hands. But they remain silent now.

Just a few years ago, when I was still writing, I might flip through some pages of a new author to see if I could enjoy the style, maybe read an excerpt from the middle. To me then, even if its entire premise and structure, character and narrative development, philosophical stance and persuasive discourse was well constructed and addressed, a good house built on rocks, there was nothing that disengaged me more than an unattractive voice. A good one would say something to me, open up the windows of perception so to speak. So most books I'd pick up at random and set back down, forever searching. Now, the cover or strange details about the form were more important. Minimalist design appealed to me, as did typography and texture. Nothing with vivid photos or people in narrative. Less is more. The more obscure the better. Something I wouldn't understand right away. Just like literature, if I couldn't understand it at face value, it would drive me deeper to root out the source.

[...]

"Why are you going to Greece so urgently, if I may ask?"

"Business, business."

"And what exactly do you do?" I figured I had a right to inquire if she was asking me to do favours for her.

"I'm something like an archaeologist, you can say."

"Something like an archaeologist," I repeated.

"Yes, something like that. There's something of great interest over there, as you can imagine. The land of the gods and titans."

"And the polis of Homer, Sophocles, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, all that."

"Yes, all that, it's great isn't it?" she said, "those breathtaking green cliffs and vistas upon which houses with red roof tiles are attached haphazardly like barnacles clinging to rock. And then you stand on top of one of them looking out at sea. It's deep blue, a million glittering jewels under the sun. In the distance,

multitudes of other islands, some small, jagged and uninhabited, on others you could almost make out people waving back—probably my imagination. The smell of the sea salt and a warm breeze gently caressing you the right way. Ah, it's exquisite. Sit by the harbour in your shades with a martini or a nice brandy, or if you want to try local flavours, grab an ouzo, perfect for the summer."

I recalled the smell of the sea and a kind of perfume that reminded me of eucalyptus. "You sound like a tourist brochure."

"Have you been there?"

"Yes, once. A few years ago. Around the same time of the year."

"It's magical, isn't it?" There was a brief pause. "What were you there for?"

"It was a vacation, needed to get something off my chest. I was young and innocent and in depression. Who isn't right? Eager to grow up, wake up, but unable to. So I took a retreat, left everything behind kind of thing. Return a new man."

"Hmm," she said. "So the trip helped you?"

"I met this aspiring poet living in a cottage there and we got off to a good start. I didn't make much of it then but I suppose her words did change me. Whether for better or worse, I can't tell." I took a sip and cradled my cup. The elephant on the case watched me. "It's a long story but she was four years older than me, wore these orange floral summer dresses and carried an old leather bag full of notebooks and tattered pages and crumpled wrappers—she had lots of Lindor chocolate bars—always squinting and looking up, looking out across the water in search of something. And every now and then, she would look completely startled, like what she had spotted was strange and new. When I asked her what it was about, she'd say she found it but wouldn't tell me what it was. Only thing I understood was that she felt the need to come to Greece because it's like the edge of the world where it converges the very roots of Western literature, history and myth into the modern mindset constructed on its geography. Something about Axis Mundi and the collective landscape of all human intelligence and imagination. Crazy words to me as a freshman, but I was intrigued. I even left behind my meager luggage. Just threw it away. I didn't need it anymore. However, with it, I had left behind something important."

"Something important?"

At that time, we would perch on high stools at the bar that had an

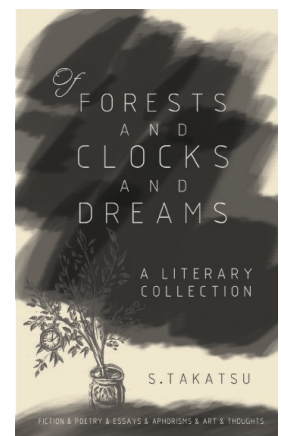

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the elephant girl by TAKATSU

outdoor pavilion that faced the sea at night and count the bobbing lights in the distance that could have been boats or spirits or something else and far in the background, there would be the strumming of classical guitars. She would talk and I would listen. I watched her lips move and her hair drip on her shoulders. She was like a conduit through which ancient goddesses would speak. The Aegean breeze seemed so laden with whispers and stories and myths, and she was just plucking these things out of the air, laying them down in words like paint strokes and sketches. Meaning was still alive in the air, in the moments and in her, not in a literary text or old buildings. After a while, we slept together once and she left without a trace, as if she had never existed. With her, all the stories I once wrote vanished. Suddenly, her ability was unattainable arcane knowledge and the substance I once had remained as distant as the mythic she was looking for. I had since been sitting in her shadow. "She was beyond me, I felt, so beyond that she must have been a glimpse of the new world I couldn't quite reach yet. I felt empty then. Empty as a newly made bowl."

"And now?" she asked.

"Now I still can't decide if meeting her was good or bad. I'm still waiting and searching for what I'm meant to hold."

"Hmmm," she said again. There was a long silence. I truncated it with a clink of my coffee cup against its saucer. She continued, "I wish I could do the same.

I'm always running around searching for other people's things. Not my own."

"Well don't search too hard, sometimes you get lost, searching for other people's things."

"Yes, it becomes your own search and you forget what you were looking for. You look so intently for things that they become your definition."

[...]

"What exactly are you looking for?"

She didn't reply for a long time. "It's hard to say. You don't really know me and I don't know you. I don't really know myself either. You just happen to have my phone and are helping me with all these, I know, extremely bothersome requests, I would pay you back if you want. But my line of work is kind of, for the lack of a better word, dangerous. It's hard to explain. There's a chance, probably near certainty, that we would never meet again. Best not to say too much."

"Archaeology can be dangerous I assume. Especially in Greece."

"Yes, especially in Greece. Sometimes finding things isn't so easy, there are all kinds of blockages you must clear away first before you can find it."

"Blockages huh?" I said.

"Blockages between two worlds, yes. Being an archaeologist is something similar to a time traveler, we are the channel, the conduit through which an ancient world and its once mystical powers can transfer. I never know which world I'm closer to. The poet girl was right about that. It does feel like convergence now that I think about it. But she was always looking up. Like there's something greater than us out there. To me, the harder we dig down and unearth deeply buried secrets, the more we learn about ourselves. At least that's what I used to believe. Anyway, I think I have to get off the phone. I'm running out of minutes. I'll be reaching soon, I promise."

I returned to my coffee which was now lukewarm and realized I forgot to mention the White Elephants.



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