



# Sora ni mizuumi

## [The Lake in the Sky]

By Saeki Kazumi

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空にみずうみ  
佐伯 一麦

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“Recently, I have been looking up at the sky more often.” The author, who lives in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, began writing his “I-novel” three full years after the Great East Japan Earthquake. A middle-aged couple, Hayase and Yuzuko, slowly resume their quiet quotidian routines, immersing themselves in this restoration several times each day as they consider from the vantage of their housing complex veranda the animals and plants they live together with under the same sky. Once this feeling comes upon them as they lie in bed listening to the cries of a hawk-owl. It happens to Yuzuko when she is in the kitchen pickling *rakkyō* onions and again when she joins a birdwatching excursion. By sharing moments in which they can repeat their activities of the previous year, the two attempt to move forward with their lives.

They did not suffer directly; their house was not washed away in the tsunami and they were not forced to evacuate by the nuclear accident. The couple, however, still avoids conversation about the disaster with their close neighbors. They do not engage in easy banter about their future hopes. This illustrates how deeply the wounds are buried within Tōhoku people who went through the events of March 11.

They now cherish the everyday world. The firm belief that this is the only place human happiness can be found is a theme infusing this novel throughout its pages. (OM)

## Saeki Kazumi

Born in Miyagi Prefecture in 1959. Awarded the Kaien Prize for New Writers for “Ki o tsugu” [Grafting Trees] in 1984, the Noma Prize for New Writers for *Shōto sākito* [Short Circuit] in 1990, the Mishima Yukio Prize for *A rūsū bōi* [A Loose Boy] in 1991, the Osaragi Jirō Prize for *Tettō kazoku* [Steel Tower Family] in 2004, the Noma Prize for Literature for *Noruge* [Norge] in 2007, the Mainichi Art Award for *Kaerenu ie* [No Home to Return To], and the Itō Sei Prize for Literature for *Watarase* in 2014.



## 佐伯 一麦

1959年宮城県生まれ。1984年「木を接ぐ」で海燕新入文学賞、1990年『シヨート・サーキット』で野間文芸新人賞、1991年『ア・ルース・ボーイ』で三島由紀夫賞、2004年『鉄塔家族』で大佛次郎賞、2007年『ノルゲ Norge』で野間文芸賞、2014年『還れぬ家』で毎日芸術賞、「渡良瀬」で伊藤整文学賞を受賞。

「近頃、空を見あげることが多くなった」。宮城県仙台市に暮らす作者は、東日本大震災後から丸3年経った頃から、この私小説を書き始めている。同じ空の下で命を共にしている鳥獣虫魚、植物を、集合住宅のベランダから思いやりながら、中年の夫婦「早瀬」と「柚子」は、穏やかな日常を少しずつ取り戻しつつある感慨に、日々、何度も浸らずにはいられない。ある時は青葉木菟の鳴き声を寢床で聞きながら。柚子は台所でらっきょうを漬け、探鳥会に参加している時も。昨年と同じ営みを今年も繰り返すことができるひとときを分かち合うことで、二人は前を向こうとしているかのようだ。

津波で家を流されたり、原発事故で避難を余儀なくされた直接の被災者ではない。だが、この夫婦は、震災の話題を親しい隣人との会話をいまだに避け、未来への希望を気軽に語らうこともない。そこに、3・11を経た東北の人びとの内面に残る傷の深さが、慟々としのばれるのだ。

彼らはいま、ここにある日常を慈しむ。そこにしか人間の幸福はないという断固たる思いが、この作品を貫く。(OM)

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