

Bite-Sized Book Club

Week 4: Short Story

Saturday, Aug 2

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Short Story Selection:

The selection for this week is “Wisteria” by Mieko Kawakami, translated from the Japanese by Hitomi Yoshio. It features a woman witnessing the destruction of a nearby home, meditating on the lives possibly lived in that home, and developing a deeper understanding of her own desires and sense of self. Whether you enjoy this story or not, please come to our book club meeting to share your thoughts!

Suggested Reflection Questions:

- This piece is set in Japan and was translated for its English publication. How does the international origin of this piece affect your reading of it? Do certain elements feel foreign or surprisingly familiar?
- The senses play an important role in this story. There is the obscuring darkness of night, the visual of the wisteria tree, the feel of the floor in the abandoned room, “the peculiar sound...of something being destroyed,” and more. Do any of these sensory experiences resonate with you? How so?
- A large portion of this story involves the protagonist imagining the life of the house’s former inhabitant. What do you make of this layering of fiction within fiction?
- What stands out to you as memorable or interesting in this story?
- What do you think about the ending of the story? Was it satisfying for you?
- Are there other pieces you have read that connect with this story in some way?

Further Reading:

Available at Town Hall Library:

- *Heaven* by Mieko Kawakami
- *All the Lovers in the Night* by Mieko Kawakami

Available through Bridges Library System (Place Hold):

- *Ms. Ice Sandwich* by Mieko Kawakami
- *Breasts and Eggs* by Mieko Kawakami
- *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories* edited by Jay Rubin
- And More!