

Box 5:31 R - Miscellany

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1039 Melrose Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
August 13, 1988

Dear Miss Uchida,

Here are the draft copies of the articles I wrote for the Phantom Friend's newsletter. I will be happy to make any corrections you suggest. If you do send me your biography, I will add more details about your life. The Alameda Library does not have SOMETHING ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

I can't recommend the Augusta Seaman book since I haven't read it, but I hope it brings back fond memories for you. Please accept it with my compliments.

I'm enclosing a SASE so you can return the articles to me for correction.

It was my privilege to talk with you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Roberts

Nancy Roberts

note
/ 11 - I can't do a fine job of articles. I've added only a few add'l bits. I'd appreciate a copy in booklet if available. It was a bit of a send me / Seaman bk. just say I had back a week or childhood memory. I'd be first priority & soon there v - I & my bio (name) etc to a safety.

MEET THE AUTHOR

YOSHIKO UCHIHDA

Yoshiko Uchida, the author of the Rinko Tsujin^{mura}aro trilogy, kindly consented to a phone interview with Nancy Roberts from her Berkeley home:

I was born in Alameda and grew up in Berkeley. During World War II, my family was uprooted and interned in Utah. I attended the University of California at Berkeley and was granted a scholarship to Smith College.

I was always interested in writing. When I was ten years old, I made booklets with the short stories I wrote. My mother, a poet, was a good role model for me. ^{By her own writing, and} ~~By reading~~ ^{helped me realize the} ~~me stories and Japanese folk tales, she ingrained in me that~~ ^{importance of the written} ~~words were important.~~ I read classics like LITTLE WOMEN, and THE SECRET GARDEN, ^{the OL Bks + Anne of Green Gables.}

^{As a} ~~None of the events in the Rinko stories actually~~ ^{Japanese} ~~happened to me, but the characters were suggested by people~~ ^{American,} ~~I knew.~~ I shared Rinko's sense of alienation. Like Rinko, I did grow up in Berkeley and attended a small Japanese ethnic church, but the books are fiction.

Since Rinko is twelve in THE HAPPIEST ENDING, and I usually write for 8-12 year olds, I don't plan ^{at the moment, to write} ~~on writing~~ another Rinko book. I may write something about her younger brother Joji. I did not set out to write a trilogy when I wrote A JAR OF DREAMS, but ^{I guess very fond} ~~my own interest and reader~~ ^{of Rinko's & her family} ~~response~~ ^{also} encouraged me to write the other two books.

SUMI'S PRIZE, SUMI'S SPECIAL HAPPENING, and SUMI AND THE GOAT AND THE TOKYO EXPRESS is a series of picture books. I have written two books about ^{about a young} ~~Yuki Sakane~~ ^{girl who lives} ~~in JOURNEY TO TOPAZ, YUKI~~ ^{in a small} ~~learns that her family must leave for internment camp.~~ ^{Japanese village} ~~JOURNEY HOME is the story of when Yuki and her family return to~~ ^{Berkeley.} I tried to show how many Japanese survived their ordeal with strength of spirit.

In my books, I aim to show the determination of the Issei (first-generation ^{of} immigrant Japanese). I particularly admire ^{the courage of} ~~the~~ women who came to America alone, without speaking English or knowing their husbands-to-be. PICTURE BRIDE (1987), is an adult novel about these women. I have tried to dispel the stereotype of Japanese women as subservient and meek, and of Japanese-American men as inscrutable. I have tried to affirm our common humanity.

⊕ ^{and} ~~and~~ her family, who ^{also} live in Berkeley, CA.

Nancy - I've added a few suggestions, but please don't feel obligated to use all of them =

over
→

Synopsis of a Series

RINKO TSUJIMURA
created by Yoshiko Uchida

Rinko is the eleven-year-old (later twelve) protagonist of three award-winning books, published in hard-cover and soft-cover by Atheneum in the 1980s.

Set in 1935-6, the stories are told in first-person by Rinko, who lives in Berkeley with her parents and two brothers, Cal (age 19), and Joji (age 10). She has a friend Tami Nukaga, but the books mainly focus on the strong and wise Japanese men and women who make their mark on Rinko's life. These are warm and moving stories of family, community, and coming-to-terms. The characters face prejudice with determination rather than bitterness.

Yoshiko Uchida says, "I hope to give young Asian Americans a sense of their past and to reinforce their pride and self-knowledge. At the same time, I want to dispel the stereotypic image still held by many non-Asians about the Japanese Americans and write about them as people. I hope to convey as well the strength of spirit and the sense of hope and purpose I have observed in many of the first-generation Japanese. Beyond that, I write to celebrate our common humanity, for I feel the basic elements of humanity are present in all our strivings."

JAR OF DREAMS (1981): The normal routine of the Tsujimuras is disturbed in two ways in this summer of 1935. First, Mama's sister Aunt Waka from Tokyo visits for the first time. Secondly, when Mama begins a home laundry to supplement the meager income from Papa's barbershop, the family is harassed by competitor Wilbur Starr. The strength of Aunt Waka and family friend Uncle Kanda teach Rinko to be the best she can be, and to be proud of who she is, even the parts that are different. They also encourage Cal to hold on to his dream of becoming an engineer and enable Papa to reach for his dream, a mechanic's shop.

THE BEST BAD THING (1983): Rinko is sure that a cycle of bad things (which occur in threes) begins when she's sent to help out the widow Mrs. (Auntie) Hata at her cucumber farm in East Oakland. A reclusive old man who makes kites lives in Auntie Hata's barn. Some bad things DO happen to Auntie Hata and one of her two sons, but her ~~determination~~ teaches Rinko that sometimes bad things turn out to be good.

*experiences
at the farm*

THE HAPPIEST ENDING (1985): When Rinko learns that Auntie Hata's daughter Teru will come from Japan to marry Mr. Kinjo, a man twice her age, she vows to save her. Mr. Kinjo boards with Mrs. Sugino, Rinko's Japanese teacher, as do the young and handsome Johnny Ochi and Mr. Higa, who has finally saved enough money to return to his wife and daughter in Japan. Rinko learns there are different types of love, and proves to herself that she is growing up.

---Nancy Roberts

Dear Yo:

I'm delighted and pleased to hear of the latest recognition of your work - the Commonwealth model.

This should and must give you a sense of accomplishment in a way that's different.

My warm and affectionate congratulations to you. May this be the start of another direction in your life and writing.

With love,

Max Dutham Roger

May 28, 1973



★ Persian Fantasy . . . design contributed by Fereidun Rahimi-Assa of Iran to benefit UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. ★ Fantaisie persane . . . composition offerte au Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance par l'artiste iranien Fereidun Rahimi-Assa. ★ Fantasía persa . . . obra donada por Fereidun Rahimi-Assa del Irán. Contribución al UNICEF, el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia. ★ Персидская фантазия . . . рисунок художника Ферейдун Рахими-Асса, Иран. Подарок Детскому фонду Организации Объединенных Наций (ЮНИСЕФ). ★ 波斯幻想圖... 伊朗弗萊登·拉欣米-阿薩繪贈聯合國兒童基金會。

Max Durham Roger
55 Hillside Avenue
Mill Valley 94941

1/6/2/73



Miss Yoshiko Uchida
1685 Solano
Berkeley
California

Mae - It was so sweet
unto take / to write
me re (CC award -

I'm awfully pleased
course, & hear 2 friends
gave me it ~~on~~ even
more a joyous occ'n -

Thanks) unti, Mae.

I was touched to hear

2 n. my best & Sil,
~~John & Mary~~

Truly
y.

P.S. The latest lit
rec'd, a
from TV sets &
J to T.

Mae Durham Roger

September 5, 1988

Dear Mae:

It was so good of you to call me about the JACL Award, and I want to tell you how much I have appreciated your support and encouragement over the years.

Because of your long and valued association with UC Berkeley, I thought you'd be interested to know that I am giving all my papers and published works to the Bancroft Library, and have also made provisions for funding the Library in the future so that children's literature can be added to the present collection.

I also want to tell you how happy I am to learn of Sid's remarkable recovery. I know it took courage and strength on the part of both of you, and I am determined to continue searching for health and healing too. Take good care of yourselves, and I'll do the same.

Warmest good wishes to you both.

Affectionately,

YOSHIKO UCHIDA

1685 SOLANO AVENUE, NO. 102
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94707

(415) 524-1152

September 3, 1988

Dear Elizabeth:

I was so happy to hear from you and to learn of your family's visit to the Constitution Exhibit in Washington. It was so good of you to write me as you did about Eliza's comments and I can't tell you how gratifying it was to have your kind words about my writing. Coming from a writer and mother, they meant a great deal to me. Thank you so much!

We're all delighted about the Redress Bill, but they're spreading out payments over 10 years, beginning in 1990 with the oldest survivors, so I don't expect to receive anything for about 5 years. Still, the fact that it was passed at all is a minor miracle, considering all the obstacles, and I hope the apology and redress will at least prevent the recurrence of similar tragedies in the future.

I've had terrible problems with my health since I last saw you. And to make a long story short, I've recently learned that my troubles are due to a combination of Immune System dysfunction (it's overactive), thyroiditis and a systemic Candida (yeast) infection. Treatment for the latter is controversial, but I'm giving it a try for want of any other alternative. It's an endless ordeal and I've had to give up writing as well as any travel. I couldn't even get to Seattle to pick up a nice award from the Jpnse Am. Citizens League in August. Thank goodness I got to Arkansas when I did!

I am so proud of you and the wonderful review of your novel in the Times. And a Book of the Month and Paperback rights too!!! You must be so pleased! I'm sure you'll be selling film or TV rights soon, because even my novel, which was virtually ignored by all reviewers except for the SF Chronicle, has gotten a few inquiries. Also, Simon/Schuster Fireside Bks is bringing out a trade paperback edition in Nov. with a new (unappealing to me!) cover, not nearly as attractive as the original.

I'm so glad you're doing a sequel to CASTLE... I loved that book and can hardly wait to read the sequel - a sentiment shared no doubt, by hundreds of children. Good luck with it!

You should mention your new business in the SCBW Newsletter and maybe put an ad in Poets and Writers. I'm sure there are a lot of beginning writers who would be interested. I'll try to spread the word too, although I don't see too many people

1685 Solano Ave., Apt. 102
Berkeley, Calif. 94707
June 1, 1971

Mr. Lee Ruttle
46 Kearny Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94108

Dear Lee:

It was very kind of you to send me the lovely card when Dad died, and I appreciated your thought of me. I am now living in a lovely apartment in Berkeley and enjoying it immensely.

This is just to let you know that my new book JOURNEY TO TOPAZ (a book for 9-12 yr olds about the evacuation - a fictionalized account) will be published by Scribner's in September.

I sent your name and address to Scribner's asking them to send you some publicity, and if possible a review copy. I recall that we once spoke about doing something at Kinokuniya when my next book was published, and if you are still interested, you might want to write to Miss Susan Kornit, Managing Editor, Books for Young Readers, Charles Scribner's, 597 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10017.

I hope this finds you and Caroline well. Please give her my regards, and my best to you, of course.

Sincerely,

Yoshiko Uchida

P.S. I hope the above address is still correct.

*Please call
6/7/71*