

Through the Arc of the Rain Forest

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Through the Arc of the Rain Forest is a burlesque of comic-strip adventures and apocalyptic portents that stretches familiar truths to their logical extreme in a future world that is just recognizable enough to be frightening. In the Author's Note," Karen Tei Yamashita writes that her book is like a Brazilian soap opera called a novela: "the novela's story is completely changeable according to the whims of the public psyche and approval, although most likely, the unhappy find happiness; the bad are punished; true love reigns; a popular actor is saved from death ... an idyll striking innocence, boundless nostalgia and terrible ruthlessness." The stage is a vast, mysterious field of impenetrable plastic in the Brazilian rain forest set against a backdrop of rampant environmental destruction, commercialization, poverty, and religious rapture. Through the Arc of the Rainforest is narrated by a small satellite hovering permanently around the head of an innocent character named Kazumasa. Through no fault of his own, Kazumasa seems to draw strange and significant people into his orbit and to find himself at the center of cataclysmic events that involve carrier pigeons, religious pilgrims, industrial espionage, magic feathers, big money, miracles, epidemics, true love, and the virtual end of the world. This book is simultaneously entertaining and depressing, with all the rollicking pessimism you'd expect of a good soap opera or a good political satire." - Kirsten Backstrom, 500 Great Books by Women

Karen Tei Yamashita is the author of Brazil-Marú, Tropic of Orange, Circle K Cycles, I Hotel, and Anime Wong, all published by Coffee House Press. I Hotel was selected as a finalist for the National Book Award and awarded the California Book Award, the American Book Award, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association Award, and the Association for Asian American Studies Book Award. She has been a US Artists Ford Foundation Fellow and is currently Professor of Literature and Creative Writing and the co-holder of the University of California Presidential Chair for Feminist & Critical Race & Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

"Fluid and poetic as well as terrifying." -
New York Times Book Review

"Bizarre and baroque, funny and sad. Yamashita's novel may say more about saving the rain forest than its nonfiction counterparts do." -
Utne Reader

"Dazzling . . . a seamless mixture of magic realism, satire and futuristic fiction." -
San Francisco Chronicle

"An imaginative tour de force." -
Capital Times

"Impressive . . . a flight of fancy through a dreamlike Brazil." -

Village Voice

"Surreal and misty, sweeping from one high-voltage scene to another." -
LA Weekly

"Amuses and frightens at the same time." -
Newsday

"Parodies misguided development the way Catch-22 did senseless wars . . . mak[ing] us
laugh and cry." -
Sierra

"An ecological fantasy that skewers giant corporations, religion, fads, yuppies and just
about every kind of greed. It may be the world's first multicultural condemnation of
capitalism." -
Pioneer Press

"An explosive satire about mortality and catastrophe." -
Asian Week

"Smooth and seamless." -
A Magazine

"An exuberant black comedy." -
Daily Yomiuri

"The American equivalent of Joseph Conrad's Congo in The Heart of Darkness." -
Rafu Shimpo

"Yamashita has drawn upon her considerable inventive powers to deliver a good read." -
Amerasia Journal

"Thoroughly entertaining." -

Stanford Daily

"Incisive and funny, this book yanks our chains and makes us see the absurdity that rules our world." -

Booklist (starred review)

"Expansive and ambitious . . . incredible and complicated." -

Library Journal

"Yamashita's biting satire is a powerful test of our senses, our sensitivities and sensibilities. I haven't been as enthralled since having read Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse Five." -

Special Libraries Association

"This satiric morality play about the destruction of the Amazon rain forest unfolds with a diversity and fecundity equal to its setting. . . . Yamashita seems to have thrown into the pot everything she knows and most that she can imagine—all to good effect." -

Publishers Weekly

"[T]he woes and ills of contemporary society are acutely described here; but Yamashita's affection for the quirkiness of human nature, as well as her sympathy for her characters' plights, makes this a novel, not a polemic. A fine debut." -

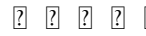
Kirkus

"Through the Arc of the Rain Forest attacks environmental devastation through the logic of satire and the sensibilities of the poetic mind. Yamashita plays out today's soap opera of the futility of man's faith in technology on the stage where it is currently most brutal, stupid and immoral: Brazilian Amazonia." -

Charles L. Hogue, Curator, National History Museum of Los Angeles

Other Books

Asian American Literature. This book introduces Asian American literary studies by engaging the conditions, contingencies, and immediate and long-term effects of its major debates. Two rationales inform Ling's presentation of the field in this way: first is a felt need to provide recognizable contours and trajectories for the evolution of Asian American criticism as an ethnic-specific minoritarian formation in the United States; second is an imperative to historicize its practices - including polemics, controversies, and ideological ruptures - as an ongoing negotiation undertaken by Asian American critics for a more self-

conscious and more adequate representation of the field's interests. These rationales are fully contextualized in the book's Introduction and Conclusion. The main body of this study is organized non-chronologically into 8 chapters, with each designed to reflect how the field has been energized by its demographic transformation, its growing intellectual heterogeneity, its defining moments, and its cross-cutting relationship with the trends in other disciplines. What has emerged and been given prominence to in the surveys and discussions of this book then constitute the essential criticism of Asian American literary studies, a discourse almost 5 decades in the making when examined retrospectively.  . This book introduces Asian American literary studies by engaging the conditions, contingencies, and immediate and long-term effects of its major debates."