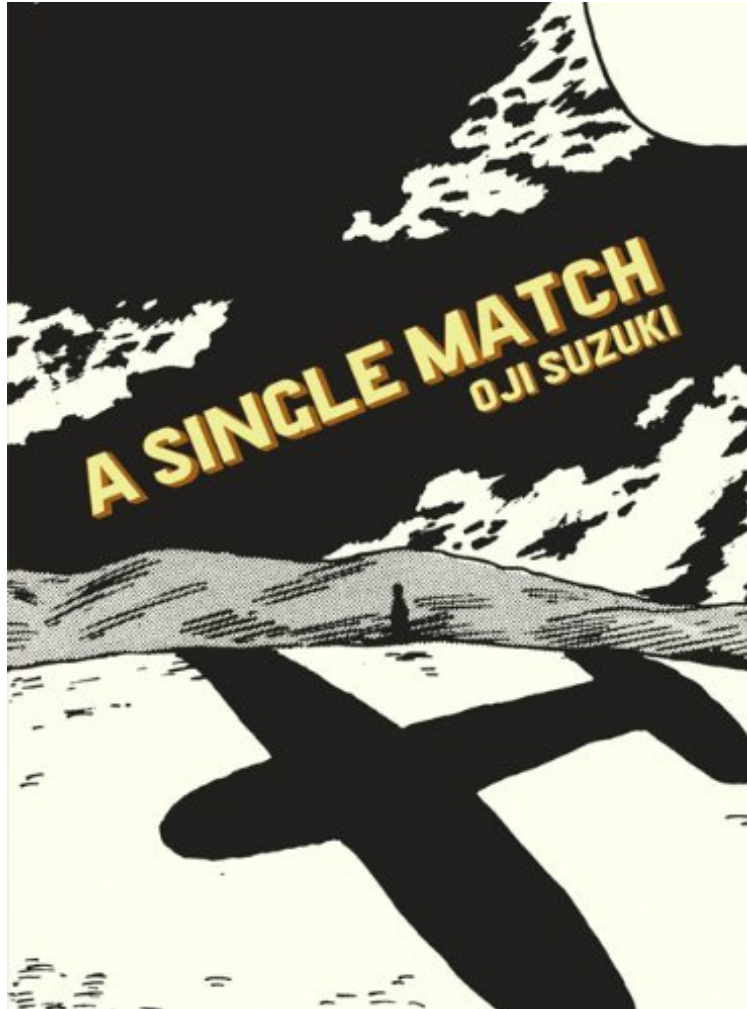


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A Single Match

Oji Suzuki

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Oji Suzuki : A Single Match before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Single Match:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Intriguing with excellent rereading value, but lacks contextBy Marci won't lie, Oji Suzuki's works are poetically heavy. Don't be surprised if you find yourself utterly lost after reading (and rereading) any of the short stories in this work. There is a lot of experimentation going on here. A lot of the stories are surprisingly relatable, but all have this darker undercurrent.My one major complaint about this particular publication is that there is no context given whatsoever, except a very short blurb about Oji Suzuki. I would have loved an introduction to the works, something about when they were published, the cultural significance of the stories, where he drew inspiration from, anything! But the works are presented as-is and that can really feel alienating, especially since they don't always speak for themselves. It's odd that Drawn and Quarterly decided not to provide contextual essays,

especially since they included historical/cultural information for most every other work in their gekiga line. On the book itself: It's hardcover and printed on nice, bright paper, and is handsomely designed. This'll definitely stand out on your bookshelf. Overall, if you're interested in something challenging that you can reread again and again and notice something new or different each time, definitely pick up this. If you're brand new to gekiga (or even classic manga in general), I'd recommend first reading *A Drifting Life* by Yoshihiro Tatsumi (also published by D+Q) to get the cultural and historical context that *A Single Match* lacks. If you don't enjoy abstract work, you most likely won't enjoy *A Single Match*.

A new author in D+Q's acclaimed gekiga line In this collection of hauntingly elliptical short stories, Oji Suzuki explores memory, relationships, and loss with a loose narrative style, filling each tale with a sense of unfulfilled longing. He plumbs the dissolute depths of human psychology, literally bathing his characters in expansive shadows that paradoxically reveal as much as they obscure. A young man catches a cold after being soaked in the rain and is tended to by his grandmother. He drifts, dreaming of a train trip with an older brother he doesn't have. A traveling salesman comes across a boy lying in the middle of the road and stops to have a cigarette and tell a story that sifts through memories of faces and places before settling back on the boy and pretending to not look at the stars. A young woman walks along the river with her bicycle and a friend who is nothing more than a disembodied head discussing past times together, memories they have of each other. Although he touches on many of the same themes as his contemporaries in the field of postwar alternative manga Yoshihiro Tsuge (*L'Homme Sans Talent*) and Seiichi Hayashi (*Red Coloured Elegy*) Suzuki uses an ever shifting narrative approach and dashes of surrealist humor to distinguish his work from that of his peers.

About the Author Oji Suzuki was born in 1949 in Nagoya, Japan. He moved to Tokyo in 1967 and within two years his first short stories were published in the avant-garde Japanese comics magazine *Garo*. Throughout the 1970s and '80s at least ten collections of his short stories were published. Suzuki has produced short films and has written and drawn children's books.