

# Survive Another Silly Day

reviewed by Richard Evanoff

*Mihiro Kizuki, Survive Another Silly Day:  
The Bilingual Poetical Works of Mihiro Kizuki.  
Book and CD, self-published, 2004.*

Mihiro Kizuki's recently published, *Survive Another Day*, a book and accompanying CD with twelve poems rendered in both English and Japanese, takes us on a descent into the inferno but still holds out the hope for some form of cosmic transcendence.

Kizuki's season in hell documents both the destruction of nature and the corresponding dehumanization of society. In the opening poem, "Digitalized," she captures the reflexivity of environmental destruction—"You will be polluted if you pollute"—as well as the dehumanization of contemporary forms of technology: "01010111 / We can not be expressed by 0 and 1."

In other poems fish (like humans?) live "half dead / In a square water tank" with muddy water, artificial food, and no sunlight, while commuters in Tokyo are swallowed into the gullets of jam-packed trains:

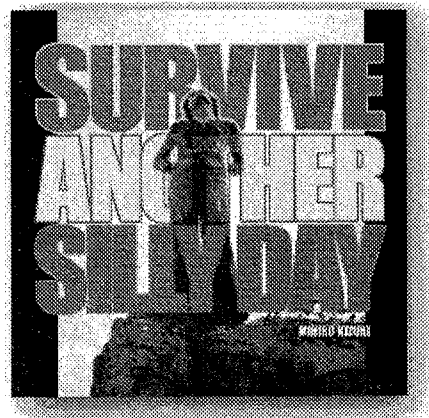
**To become prey to the big city  
To be eaten in the morning  
To be digested during the daytime  
To be excreted at night....**

"Pieces of the Cosmos" offers up a more hopeful vision, however: "Breathe a piece of the sky," it suggests, "Drink a piece of the sea." Kizuki's version of the Situationist slogan—"Beneath the paving stones it's the beach"—goes like this: "This planet is still a baby if you peel a sheet of asphalt."

You get the feeling, though, that such moments of raw earthiness are more hoped for than realized. In "The Lost Sky" Kizuki writes that she wants to see "the sky full of sky" instead of the electric cables that obscure her view. The meaning here is not only literal: the sky becomes a "real empyrean" complete with nymphs of paradise. Or maybe it's literal after all. In "Pray" the world Kizuki petitions for is a world of shining water and sparkling winds, not a mere fantasy.

The reality is, however, that such a world will never come to pass unless we ourselves take the initiative. Indeed, there are times when the prospects for transformation seem doubtful. In the title poem of the collection, Kizuki writes:

**I'm powerless  
However much I scream, the sun is to set  
However much I cry, the moon is to wane  
Even if my hands turn into fists, the season is to change  
Even if my eyes rush into tears, the years are to pass.**



The poem concludes on a stoic note: "We stay alive hanging on something we haven't gotten."

At times Kizuki's poetry seems resigned to the idea that survival might be the best we can hope for. At other times, however, she recognizes the power of individuals to make a difference. "We are drops of rain which have to fall into this hell," she writes in "Drops of Rain," but it's ultimately up to each of us "To make a whole in the dark cloud above you and get a line of sunshine."

The advice in "S.F.W." ("So Fuckin' What?") is a bit tougher: so what if we live in a rotten society with polluted air that makes us dirty and shitty water that makes us nasty. Life has to be affirmed despite its tears and pain. So stop complaining and start doing something: "Seize your world, dude!"

In "Losers" Kizuki expresses no sympathy for either "winners" who go to war and write history or for "losers" who keep sliding off the road and can't create their own lives. The poems in this collection don't pull any punches, but what they're fighting for is a world that's worth living in and a renewed sense of human authenticity.

Kizuki, a veteran reader in the Tokyo literary scene (she reads frequently at What the Dickens and is the prime mover behind the poetry readings at Ben's Cafe), delivers a nuanced performance on the accompanying C.D., which includes nine poems in Japanese and three in English, ranging from the seamless rant of "Digitalized" to the haunting flutters of "Petals of Flame" and the staccato syllables of "Fish." The music, composed by Masashi Nezumiya, serves more as an envelope for delivering the spoken word than as mere background.

The book and CD come together as a set and are on sale for ¥1,575 (tax included) at Flying Books, Shibuya Kosho Center 2F, 1-6-3 Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku. Tel: 03-3461-1254. Website: <http://www.flying-books.com/>. *Survive Another Silly Day* can also be ordered directly from the author at: [mihirock@hotmail.com](mailto:mihirock@hotmail.com). Website: <http://www.mihiro.net/> ■