



# Once and Forever

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It is time that Kenji Miyazawa, long recognized as a writer of genius in his own country, enjoyed the same reputation abroad. Are his fables, in which acorns quarrel and flowers fret about losing their looks, written for children or adults? They are for both: for adventurous young minds, but also for older readers in whom the spark of curiosity, combined with a taste for fantasy and a love of language, is still alight. This collection, appearing for the first time in paperback, brings together the best of his stories. They range from cautionary tales to small prose poems, from social satire to unmistakable tragedy. All share an intense delight in the natural world -- a sense of oneness with other living creatures and with the vast universe around us.

Miyazawa is entirely original. No other Japanese writer, before or since, has told stories as fresh in detail but universal in scope as this man who lived and died, still young, in Japan's far north.

## Once and Forever Details

Date : Published January 1st 1998 by Kodansha (first published 1994)

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Author : Kenji Miyazawa

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## From Reader Review Once and Forever for online ebook

### **Mimi says**

A group of delightful and magical stories

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### **Geert says**

The best I've read so far this year - by far. Exquisite, made for slow reading

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### **Jimmie Lee Johnson says**

Good short stories with talking animals

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### **Jonathan says**

Wow this really was a beautiful little book. A number of the stories I found to be very touching - even if a bit alien.

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### **Gurldoggie says**

A collection of Japanese fairy stories. Like the best such stories, the narratives unwind in a very direct fashion - "The girl said this. And then the fox replied." such that you hardly even bat an eye that the stories involve a lonely earth god or a courtroom full of acorns. Some of the tales resolve with a moral lesson, but the best of them remain ambiguous and mysterious long after you've finished reading. The language is overly twee at times - who can say if this is the fault of the writer, or of the translator? - which robs the stories of some of their strength. But this book is both strange and familiar and well worth reading nonetheless.

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### **Taylor Lee says**

Tales magically teeming with innocence, thick with the wondrous motion of nature, and charmingly, slyly playful. Delightful, wistful, and entertaining.

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### **Peter says**

Oddly fresh, considering they are 100 years old. Remind me a bit of Winnie the Pooh in that animals have more character than a lot of human characters.

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## Sahel says

This is a very different world than what we're familiar with: Here, you might encounter a fox in a tailored suit talking astronomy with a sentimental tree, a group of frogs who get drunk on imported whiskey, or an army of marching telegraph poles...

This is a world that I believe we all need to get lost into for a while!

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## Patricia says

Some of the stories feature creatures who stand for human beings, as often happens in fables. But Miyazawa makes things even more fun with his own special twists, like the fox's new shoes. Even richer and stranger are other stories that travel into the mind of other than human nature, imagining what the crabs are thinking for instance. Even the crab story could be a traditional anthropomorphic fable, with the crabs standing in for human beings faced with the randomness of how death or beauty arrives inexplicably. However, the story creates something other than simple anthropomorphism, rather a blurring of boundaries between human and animal, a sense of shared experience. Most of the stories undo boundaries in unsettling and illuminating ways.

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## Chris says

Lyrical.

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## Serdar says

Full review here: <https://www.ganriki.org/article/once-...>

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## Harajyuku says

Comfortable little stories, with all the wonder of a sunrise at the end of a long and quiet night. Talking animals, rural scenery, and a deceptively simple but beautiful down-home tone make them seem like real folktales, albeit ones refreshingly uncoupled from moralizing. (If there is an instruction, it might be a simply and unforcefully-put "be polite.") Standouts, in order of preference: "The First Deer Dance," "Night of the Festival" (an honest scene), "Wildcat and the Acorns" (just noticing all of these are from the perspectives of children), "Gorsch the Cellist," "The Nighthawk Star" and "The Wild Pear."

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## Jennifer says

This book is probably better than I'm rating it, but since I don't read many short stories, let alone children's

fables translated from Japanese, I feel like it just didn't really click with me. I loved the beautiful descriptions of the natural world, that were almost like poetry. There were some stories I enjoyed unreservedly (March by Moonlight, The Ungrateful Rat, The Restaurant of Many Orders) but many others that just left me vaguely puzzled or unsatisfied. I think this is because I just don't have the right cultural frame of reference to pick up the allusions to Japanese folklore, Buddhism, and history that we're peppered throughout. Also, western children's stories are steeped in morality; these were often "lessonless" or with lessons that westerners would never teach their children (as in *The Fire Stone*). So, interesting but not really my cup of tea.

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### **Aaron Kent says**

I would have rated this as 5 stars but it's a translation. This has bearing on the translator as he did a very fine job, I just imagine that in the original idiom these tales are perfect.

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### **Shaye says**

A fun read. The fairy tales are whimsical and interesting, even for an adult. Maybe it is simply because I was thinking of them being Japanese, but I had vivid Miyazaki-like animation playing out in my head for each of these stories. And I really enjoyed that.

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