CHAPTER 1

Life of and Influences on the Author

CHILDHOOD

Hayashi Fumiko[1] was born in Moji, a small town on the Shimonoseki Straits, in 1903.[2] Her mother, Hayashi Kiku, and father, Miyata Asatarō, were not married, so Fumiko was registered in her maternal uncle's (Hayashi Hisayoshi) family registry. Fumiko never expressed negative feelings about the fact that Kiku bore her out of wedlock—for her, lineage or birth was of secondary importance. Some of her fictional characters are illegitimate children, but their illegitimacy is never something with which they struggle in any psychological way. Illegitimacy is presented as more of a social barrier than anything else. This will be discussed in more detail later, but suffice it to say that Fumiko did not let her illegitimacy become a disruptive concern in her life.

Kiku was born on November 28, 1868, the eldest daughter of her mother, Fuyu, and her father, Shinzaemon. Her family ran a drugstore in Kagoshima, and then later a hot-spring inn in Sakurajima.[3] Kiku had a daughter, Hide, out of wedlock on July 13, 1898. A man by the name of Matsuyama Kojirō acknowledged paternity, but did not marry Kiku. In his biography of Fumiko, *Hayashi Fumiko: Hito to sakuhin* (Hayashi Fumiko: The Writer and Her Works, 1966), Fukuda Kiyoto frankly notes that Hide and Fumiko were most likely not the only children that Kiku bore, and that there is no way to know how many other siblings by different fathers Fumiko may actually have had.[4] In *Diary of a Vagabond*, Fumiko writes that she had a total of six siblings but that she had only ever met one, a sister—presumably Hide. She says she has bitter memories of that sister, and that she did not like the way in which the sister treated Kiku.[5] Reading Fumiko's other autobiographical works, however, one gets the impression that she was an only child; obviously her siblings, however many there may have been, did not play a very important role in her life.

Fumiko's father, Asatarō, was born in 1882 in Ehime Prefecture, the oldest son of a middle-class farming family. His family also ran a silver-

smith shop, and he had an uncle who made a specialized kind of paper—Iyo paper—in the prefectural capital, Matsuyama. Asatarō helped his uncle by peddling the paper, and this was the beginning of his career as an itinerant peddler. Later Asatarō struck out on his own peddling lacquerware and cutlery. This work took him to Sakurajima, where he often stayed at Kiku's family's inn.[6] It was there that the two met and became romantically involved.

Kiku was fourteen years Asatarō's senior—quite an age gap—and Fukuda Kiyoto says that this, and the fact that Asatarō never registered Fumiko in his own family register, would suggest that Asatarō never had any intention of marrying Kiku; he was simply interested in a short affair, but the birth of a baby caused him to stay seven years with Kiku before finally abandoning her and Fumiko for another woman.[7] Fumiko says in *Diary of a Vagabond* that her mother was chased out of town for becoming involved with someone from another province, but it seems more likely that Kiku's infidelity itself, not the foreignness of her lover (Asatarō), embarrassed her family enough to ask her to leave. Kiku and Asatarō moved to Yamaguchi Prefecture.[8]

Sometime between September 1899 and May 1901, Kiku and Asatarō left Sakurajima and went on the road together as itinerant peddlers. The couple rented a house in Moji, and it was there that, after a labor induced by a fall down a flight of stairs, Kiku gave birth to Fumiko.[9] At the time of Fumiko's birth Asatarō was working in Shimonoseki as an assistant in a pawn shop, but by 1904 he had set out in his own independent business and moved the family from Moji to Shimonoseki, where he ran an auction house. Business was brisk due to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and Asatarō soon opened branch stores in the cities of Wakamatsu, Nagasaki, and Kumamoto. To run these branches he enlisted the help of some friends, one of whom was Sawai Kisaburō, the man who would eventually adopt Fumiko as his own daughter. Kisaburō came from a farming family in Okayama Prefecture, and was twenty years Kiku's junior.

In 1907, Asatarō moved the headquarters of the store from Shimonoseki to Wakamatsu. Located near the ferry crossing (Wakamatsu is located in the Gotō Archipelago off the coast of Kyūshū), the shop sold such things as gold-leaf screens, Buddhist altars, cigarette cases, cloth, textiles, and pocketwatches. The shop also served as a residence for Asatarō, Kiku, Fumiko, Kisaburō, and other shop employees. For three years the family lived this way, until Asatarō's philandering caused too much strife for the family to stay together. Asatarō had a mistress named Hama, a geisha whom he had been seeing for years and who followed the family to Wakamatsu when they moved there. Asatarō set up Hama in her own apartment nearby, but Kiku, who was quite aware of

the circumstances, objected to the idea of so much money being spent on her husband's mistress, so Hama was moved into the shop residence with the family. As one may imagine, this caused quite a bit of tension among family members. By this point Asatarō was eager to find an excuse to end his relationship with Kiku. He also realized that Kisaburō felt empathy for her, and he used that as a pretext to throw them both out of the house: he sent Kiku out on a business errand on New Year's Eve, 1910, and when she failed to return in good time he sent Kisaburō out to look for her. When the two of them finally came home, he accused them of having an affair and told them to leave the house.[10] Fumiko was called before her father, who asked her if she wanted to go with her mother or stay with him. Fumiko replied firmly that she preferred the former, so Kisaburō, Kiku, and Fumiko moved to Nagasaki.[11] Fumiko's parents' unhappy union apparently left a deep impression on her; although she recorded remarkably few bad memories from her childhood, the topic of soured marriages began appearing in her fiction quite early.

Over the course of the next ten years, Fumiko changed residences and schools numerous times, as Kisaburō's work as a traveling salesman required relative mobility. In April 1910, Fumiko was enrolled in the Katsuyama Elementary School in Nagasaki. Sometime shortly after that she transferred to the Hachiman Girls' Elementary School in Sasebo. In January 1911, she transferred from the Hachiman Girls' Elementary School to the Naike Elementary School in Shimonoseki, where she remained until October 1914. Her transcripts from this period show average marks and a total of twenty-five absences during the four-year period.

While Fumiko was living in Shimonoseki with Kiku and Kisaburō, Asatarō moved from Wakamatsu to Moji and opened a new store there. He married Hama in June 1911, but they divorced not long after in February 1914. Inoue Takaharu, in his biography *Hayashi Fumiko to sono shūhen* (Hayashi Fumiko and Her Environs, 1990), says that while Asatarō and Hama were married Fumiko visited them often, sometimes staying the night at their house.[12] However, this information conflicts with some other accounts in which Fumiko is said to have rarely seen her father and to have not felt much warmth toward him.[13] Two of the main causes of this belief are the semi-autobiographical novel that Fumiko wrote in 1939 entitled *Hitori no shōgai* (One Person's Life), and an essay she wrote in 1941, "Chichi o kataru" (A Discourse on My Father). In the novel, the narrator tells of her lack of affection for her father, such as in the following statements: "Perhaps it was because I had been separated from him for a long time, but in any case I could not feel even a little love toward my father";[14] and "I must confess here that

I have nothing but hard, cold feelings toward my father, who threw out his own wife and child."[15] The events in *One Person's Life* so closely resemble events in Fumiko's life that it is easy to assume that the former is a true account of the latter, but there is no corroborating evidence that Fumiko truly felt that way about her father. Indeed, there are other events described in *One Person's Life* that apparently never happened in Fumiko's life, such as an affair with a man named Koizumi while she was in Paris.[16] Takemoto Chimakichi addresses this issue in his biography, *Ningen: Hayashi Fumiko* (The Person: Hayashi Fumiko, 1985) and concludes that Fumiko felt strongly about her father, but not in a negative way.[17]

In other works, Fumiko recalled this period of her childhood as a happy one; she harbored no animosity toward Hama and seemed to enjoy her visits to Moji. Kiku and Kisaburō did not object to her spending time in Moji, either. Even after Asatarō and Hama separated, Fumiko is thought to have visited her father often. Some sources even say that Asatarō helped pay for Fumiko's later schooling in Onomichi.[18]

Fumiko thus shuttled between parents, but in October 1914, Kisaburō's clothing store failed and he and Kiku decided to try itinerant peddling again. Kiku left Fumiko in the care of her niece, Tsuru, in Kagoshima. Consequently, Fumiko changed schools again, this time to the Yamashita Elementary School in Kagoshima. Fumiko did not stay long with Tsuru before she was shunted to Kiku's mother's house, also in Kagoshima. Fumiko did not get along well with her grandmother, Fuyu, and she did not attend school often during this time. Details of her life between October 1914 and May 1916 are unclear, but after that period she joined Kiku and Kisaburō on the road, helping them to sell their goods.

In May 1916 the family rented a house in Onomichi, which they used as a base for their peddling business. Fumiko was enrolled in the fifth grade class of the Second Municipal Elementary School in Onomichi. It was at this school that she came under the guidance of a teacher, Kobayashi Masao, who would remain an important figure in her life. Kobayashi was the first teacher to recognize Fumiko's literary talent; he encouraged her to pursue studies in literature, music, and painting. The following year Fumiko asked her mother for permission to continue her education, and Kiku agreed. After passing the entrance examinations, Fumiko was enrolled in the Onomichi Municipal Girls' High School. She paid her own tuition out of money she earned working evenings at a local sail factory and working weekends at a noodle shop. It was also around this time that Fumiko made the acquaintance of a boy named Okano Gun'ichi, a student at the Onomichi Commercial High School. Gun'ichi was Fumiko's first love, and when he graduated in 1921 and moved to Tokyo to attend Meiji University, he wrote

to Fumiko and encouraged her to come to the capital after she finished school in Onomichi.

Fumiko did well at painting and composition but she struggled with mathematics and science, so she took remedial lessons from Kobayashi at his house. Kiku and Kisaburō, busy working, were often absent from the house when Fumiko came home from school, so to escape the loneliness at home Fumiko would spend time in the school library, where she eagerly read such works as Jack London's (1876–1916) *White Fang* (1906) in translation, and Suzuki Miekichi's (1882–1936) *Kawara* (Tile, 1911). After her reading comprehension improved, she progressed to such works as Abbé Prévost's *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (The History of Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut, 1731), Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen* (1847), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Werther, 1774), all in translation. When she became a second-year student she came under the tutelage of Imai Tokusaburō, a Waseda University graduate, who introduced her to the poetry of Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), Walt Whitman (1819–1892), Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788–1857), Novalis (aka Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801), Karl Busse (1872–1918), and others. It was also during this time that Fumiko began writing lyrical poetry.

One should note that Fumiko never learned any foreign language well enough to be able to read foreign literature in the original; she read all of the above works in translation.[19] She studied English in school, but she never gained proficiency. She studied French at night school during the time that she spent in Paris in the early 1930s, but her French remained rudimentary. She learned a little Chinese when she visited China in the late 1930s, but it amounted to no more than isolated phrases. Likewise, she learned fragmented Malay while in Southeast Asia in the early 1940s, but never became fluent. Learning words and expressions in foreign languages was entertaining for Fumiko, but she never showed enough interest to continue her studies to an advanced level. In her work she only occasionally comments on her foreign language ability, most notably in "Pari (no) nikki" (Paris Diary, 1947) and "Shiberiya no santō ressha" (Third Class on the Trans-Siberian Railroad, 1932). In the former piece, she records her enrollment in night school in order to learn French, but she says that her French never amounted to much. In the latter, she has stilted but enjoyable conversations with her compartment companions (presumably in English) and also struggles to understand the many foreign languages she encounters throughout the train trip. Itagaki Naoko says that Fumiko did well in language-related subjects in school, and that she enjoyed English, but there is no record of her actual ability in the subject.[20]

She was quite fond of inserting foreign phrases in her text, especially in French, English, and Chinese. With French and English, either she would write the phrase in *kanji* (Chinese characters) and gloss the characters with the pronunciation, or simply write the word phonetically in *kana*. With Chinese, she would write the word in *kanji* and gloss it with Chinese pronunciation. In either case, mistakes were frequent, even allowing for pronunciation changes due to Japanese phonetic limitations. The use of foreign terms was more for decorative emphasis than for anything else. Accuracy was secondary, as long as there was a taste of the foreign language to give the reader a feel for the atmosphere of the story.

The teenage Fumiko was fond of reading, and it is possible that reading books was more enjoyable than reading blackboards, for she was quite near-sighted. Fumiko started to wear glasses from an early age, but she was self-conscious about them and wore them only when absolutely necessary.[21] Many photographs of her show her without her glasses, looking vacantly toward the camera (which must have been but a blur in her vision). Later in her adult years, this myopia translated into a focus on the olfactory as opposed to the visual or aural. Landscapes, people, rooms, and so on are described by their scent. Some works mention scents more than others, but olfactory descriptions are found in almost every piece, both fiction and nonfiction (i.e., travelogues and essays). Some examples follow below:

a) [In a letter to her distant lover:] Even now, your scent remains on my hands. (*Ten Years* in *Shinchō HFZ* vol. 21, 13)

b) "Well, grandmother comes from a family of doctors, so she smells like medicine." (*Ten Years*, 30)

c) Rikue brought the fountain pen up to her nose. It had a sour smell. When she gave it a good sniff, it smelled like a man's hair. Soon that sourness spread like steam and surrounded her on all sides. Rikue turned around and around, trying to blow away the hateful smell. (*Ten Years*, 49)

d) When Yukiko brought her sleeve to her lips, in some way it smelled like Tetsuo. (*Ten Years*, 59)

e) "In [the box] of incense that was sent from Hatoi Temple there is a scent that I like. Whenever I smell that scent, I remember the time when grandmother passed away and there is no stopping the loneliness and nostalgia that ensues."[22] (*Ame* [Rain, 1942] in *Shinchō HFZ* vol. 21, 167)

f) I had become a waitress right down to the smell . . . (*Diary of a Vagabond* in *Shinchō HFZ* vol. 2, 149)

g) When I opened the closet doors I suddenly smelled the odor of a lonely woman living alone. (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 160)

h) "I like *sensei*, she is a good teacher, that's why I like her. I love her smell, too. But, I don't like her smell very much now." (*Kawa uta* [River Song, 1941] in *Shinchō HFZ* vol. 20, 174)

i) The smell of medicine was as refreshing as mountain air. (*Ten Years*, 15)

j) I went outside. A smell of fish wafted through the village. (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 166)

k) It was an evening that spoke of the coming of spring, fragrant with the smells of incense and women. (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 175)

l) Having just come from the bath, my skin smelled strongly of soap. Somehow when I smelled the smell of soap I felt like I wanted to go to France. (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 195)

m) In the theater, dusty from human breath, the smells of tobacco, dried fish, mandarin oranges, and the stench of the toilet all filled one's nose. (*River Song*, 30)

n) When she passed through the Kaminari Gate onto Nakamise Way, her bosom was boiling over with the smells of Asakusa. (*River Song*, 277)

o) Rikue washed her face and opened the window—there must have been a chestnut tree or something somewhere, as she had the sense of a melancholy smell wafting with the breeze into the room. (*Ten Years*, 32)

p) The room was cold and smelled of medicine, and there was a loneliness that stimulated a sense of sadness as one might experience on a journey. (*Ten Years*, 125)

q) Perhaps it was the wind, or the driving rain hitting the bamboo blinds, that evoked a feeling something like the sadness felt on a journey. Mixed with the smell of the incense that had been burning for many days were the smells of dirt and of the kitchen. (*Rain*, 166)

r) Michiko lay her face down on the book of poetry and pressed her eyes against it. The nostalgic smell of the printed paper rose to her nose. (*Rain*, 197)

s) I embraced the smell of the dear wooden box to my bosom and thought warmly of the New Year's gifts I would send home. (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 163)

These passages can be divided into three groups: first, those that use smell to describe characters; second, those that describe settings; and

third, those that relate smells to emotions. The first group includes (a) through (h). A person's smell, be it their perfume, their perspiration, or some other odor, brings their image to mind without a visual description. Fumiko does not describe the character's appearance; rather, she describes his/her scent and that often indicates his/her appearance. What is also notable is that although the memory must be partially visual—it would be hard to remember a person without seeing some sort of image of their physical appearance—the vision is omitted from the narrative. In passage (c) Rikue does not see the man from whom she wants to escape, in passage (d) Yukiko does not see Tetsuo, in passage (f) Fumiko does not appear with a soiled apron. Yet all those images pass through the reader's mind with nothing more than the description of the smell.

Sight and smell are different from the other senses in that they do not involve an action by the perceiving actor: touch involves an action by definition, taste necessarily involves the act of consumption, and sound can only be created by an action (i.e., nonaction does not produce sound). Only in the case of sight and smell can an actor be doing nothing else but exercising that sense. Therefore, in order to conjure up an image without an action, the writer has only two choices, sight and smell. The former is much more commonly chosen by writers in general than the latter, so the emphasis that Fumiko puts on smells offers a fresh change. Also, a sight can be described without associated smells entering the reader's mind (the image of a telephone does not bring to mind a certain smell), but smells invariably cause one to envision the object that gives off the odor (the smell of fresh bread immediately brings to mind the image of a hot loaf). Fumiko's scent-based descriptions thus have a richness lacking in purely visual descriptions.

The second group of passages are those that describe settings through smells instead of views. This group includes (i) through (n). Like those passages that describe characters, these passages also usually bring to mind both the smell and the sight of the landscape. Passage (m) particularly does so, as one imagines the thick air swirling in the theater air and the audience lighting and smoking their cigarettes, peeling oranges and popping the sections into their mouths, ripping pieces of dried fish with their teeth and chewing laboriously, and finally getting up to go to the squalid toilet. These actions are not in the passage itself, but they are undoubtedly those that spring to the reader's mind, as the description of the smells of these actions cannot be divorced from the actions themselves in one's mind.

The final group of passages are those that relate smells to a sense of loneliness, melancholy, or nostalgia. A detailed discussion of Fumiko's use of loneliness and nostalgia in her travel imagery follows in chapter 3, but passages (e) and (o) through (s) demonstrate here how she com-

bines smells with these emotions.[23] For example, in passage (o), the smell itself is described as melancholy; this is technically impossible, but the implication is that the smell of the chestnut tree reminds her of something that makes her sad. In passage (e), the smell of incense brings back the memory of a lost grandmother, a memory that causes the speaker to feel nostalgic. In (r), Michiko has no past experiences with the printed page to make her feel nostalgic about the smell of ink, but rather it is the poetry written in such ink that evokes her emotions. In these and the other examples, the smell brings forth a memory that is directly associated with an emotion. Fumiko's use of smell did not change over the years; there are similar passages in works from the earliest days of her writing career and in those she wrote decades later.

YOUNG ADULTHOOD

In 1921, as a fourth-year student at the girls' school, Fumiko had some of her poetry published in *San'yō hinichi shinbun* (The San'yō Daily Newspaper) under the pen name Akinuma Yōko. She also published three poems—"Haien no yūbe" (Evening at the Superannuated Estate), "Kanariya no uta" (Canary's Song), and "Inochi no sake" (Elixir of Life)—in *Bingo jiji shinbun* (The Bingo Current Events Newspaper). Fumiko graduated from the girls' school with poor marks, ranking 76th in a class of 85 students. The combination of not doing well in the sciences and working nights and weekends took its toll on her academic record but it did not prevent her from graduating. Because of her humble origins and the relatively spotty nature of her early education, Fumiko is often thought of as one who never finished school, but this is simply not the case. While her education was not particularly advanced, it did provide her with the basic skills she needed to become the popular writer that she was. It would be an exaggeration to say that she was an extraordinarily gifted child who taught herself to write; Kobayashi and Imai both encouraged and helped her learn more about literature. However, while she continued to read widely as an adult, her literary curiosity never extended into philosophically complex academic questions. Furthermore, her vocabulary never displayed the depth and variety that one would associate with the precocious child she is often said to have been. In sum, she was neither a child genius nor an elementary school dropout; she was a secondary school graduate of average, or perhaps slightly above average, intelligence.

Fumiko decided to take Gun'ichi's advice and move to Tokyo in April 1922. The city held two promises for Fumiko: first, the chance to live happily ever after in a marriage with her childhood sweetheart; sec-

ond, the opportunity to advance in the literary world. The majority of writers in Japan at the time lived and worked in Tokyo, and it was generally considered the place one should live if one wanted to establish oneself as a writer.

Once in Tokyo, Fumiko had to support herself while she waited for Gun'ichi to graduate from university. She went through a gamut of jobs: public bath attendant, shoe attendant, electrical factory worker, celluloid toy factory worker, parcel wrapper, office worker in a stockbroker's, and more.[24] Soon after Fumiko had moved to Tokyo, Kiku and Kisaburō also moved there and set up a second-hand clothing store in the Kagurazaka area. Fumiko then worked with her mother transporting goods for the store.

In March 1923 Gun'ichi finally graduated, but things did not go as Fumiko had planned. Gun'ichi's family objected to his marrying Fumiko, presumably because of her dubious background, so he ended up breaking his engagement to her. It was a great disappointment for her, but she stayed on in Tokyo working in a café and living in a rented apartment in Shinjuku, not far from where her parents were living. When the Great Kantō Earthquake hit on September 1, 1923, Fumiko fled the city along the coast to Ōsaka, then went to Onomichi, where she stayed at her former teacher Kobayashi Masao's house. It was during this time that Kobayashi suggested she use the pen name "Fumiko."[25] She later went to Shikoku, where she met with her parents who had fled there from the devastated Tokyo area. From about this time on, she began keeping the diary that was the basis for her first novel, *Diary of a Vagabond*.

In 1924, Fumiko returned to Tokyo, where she worked for two weeks as a maid for the writer Chikamatsu Shūkō (1876–1944). She may have intended to stay longer, but two weeks were all she could stand of such work. As she did a few years earlier, she went from low-wage job to low-wage job—celluloid factory worker, salesperson in a wool shop, scrivener's assistant in the city district office, office worker, sushi shop assistant, waitress, and so on—to support herself, but the wages were not sufficient and her parents had to send her money from Onomichi (where they were living) to cover her cost of living.

During this time, she got to know the poet and modern theater actor Tanabe Wakao (1889–1966). She moved in with him, but the relationship did not last long. One day Fumiko found a savings passbook with a balance of 2,000 yen and a love letter from another woman in his bag. Fumiko had been working to support the both of them and barely making ends meet, so the realization that he was hording money plus having an affair was enough to make her leave him after only two or three months.[26] Through Tanabe, Fumiko had met the poet Tomotani Shizue

and through her consequently got to know a group of anarchist poets who met on the second floor of a French restaurant in Hongō. The regulars included Hagiwara Kyōjirō (1899–1938), Tsuboi Shigeji (1897–1975), Okamoto Jun (1901–1978), Takahashi Shinkichi (b. 1901), Ono Tōzaburō (b. 1903), Kanbe Yūichi (1902–1954), Tsuji Jun (1884–1944), and Nomura Yoshiya (1901–1940). It was here, too, that she met the nineteen-year-old Hirabayashi Taiko (1905–1972), with whom she became good friends.

The above-mentioned anarchist poets are described by Fukuda in the following way:

> In the literary world [following the end of World War I], emphasis was placed on "labor literature" and the periodical *The Sower* was started as one of the first pieces of proletarian literature [in Japan]. Among the people in this movement [which focused on Proletarian literature], the anarchists composed a faction that strove for the utopian extremes of nineteenth-century European liberal thought. These Japanese anarchists sought the nihilistic pleasures that had arisen in Germany. They were baptized in the surrealist hues of Dadaism. And they were a bit Bohemian on top of it all.[27]

Other accounts describe this group in a similar fashion; the consensus is that the writers who met at the French restaurant composed a group who, in the political turmoil following World War I, were interested in a broad spectrum of leftist movements. But while anarchism, liberalism, nihilism, and Dadaism do not share identical ideologies, they do have one thing in common: they are all antiestablishmentarian. It was this unifying aspect that seems to have interested these poets. Certainly this would have attracted Fumiko too, for she was as far distanced from the establishment as possible. The poets' rhetoric soon wore thin on Fumiko, though, and a few years later she decided that their ideas were too extreme for her tastes and she withdrew from the group.[28]

In July 1924, Tomotani and Fumiko began publishing a pamphlet entitled *Futari* (The Two of Us), which contained poetry by both of them.[29] Funds for publishing *The Two of Us* were provided by Kanbe Yūichi, the publisher of the Dadaist magazine *Damudamu* and one of the anarchists who met regularly at the French restaurant. Fumiko's poetry, particularly her poem "O-shaka-sama" (Lord Buddha, 1924) was highly praised by Tsuji Jun, but *The Two of Us* was discontinued after only three issues. Fumiko had enough confidence in her writing skills, though, to visit and consult with two well established writers during this time: Uno Kōji (1891–1961) and Tokuda Shūsei (1871–1943). Uno Kōji gave her advice on how to write, and Tokuda Shūsei gave her financial assistance.

After separating from Tanabe, Fumiko lived briefly in a boarding house with a young student from Tōyō University who also wrote poetry. Shortly after that she became intimate friends with Nomura Yoshiya (one of the leftist writers mentioned above) and ended up moving into his boarding house with him. Nomura was the critic Chiba Kameo's (1878–1935) nephew and had published an article in a supplemental issue of *Chūō kōron* (Central Review) in June 1923, entitled "Puroretaria sakka to sono sakuhin" (Proletarian Writers and Their Works). He later published two poetry anthologies, *Hoshi no ongaku* (Celestial Music, 1924) and *Sankakukei no taiyō* (Triangular Sun, 1926). Fumiko describes Nomura in *Diary of a Vagabond* as a violent man who beat her.[30] In addition to that, he was a sickly man who could not contribute much to supporting the two of them, which left the brunt of the burden on Fumiko.[31] Eventually he, like Tanabe before him, took up another lover and Fumiko left him in 1926 to move in with Hirabayashi Taiko, who had also recently parted with her lover, Iida Tokutarō (1903–1933).

Fumiko's difficult childhood and experience with Nomura were undoubtedly behind her tendency to write with brutal frankness. Especially in her earlier works, Fumiko often depicts her characters' actions and dialogue with a bluntness not often seen in Japanese literature from the period. She prefers her characters to have clearly defined opinions and behavior rather than vague responses and ambiguous references. The result may have shocked some contemporary readers, as Fumiko does not shy away from depicting psychological and physical violence. The following passage, from her novel *Inazuma* (Lightning, 1936), demonstrates this. The two characters involved are the heroine, Kiyoko, and Takakichi, a man whom her family wants her to marry. Kiyoko does not want to be party to an arranged marriage, but Takakichi is persistent. It is near the end of the story, and Takakichi has come to Kiyoko's place searching for his sister, Mitsuko, who has disappeared. Kiyoko is vexed by his presence:

> Takakichi had a boil-like abscess under his right ear, and he had a dark plaster stuck on it. His face looked oddly inhuman, and there were frightening dark circles under his eyes. He put an Asahi cigarette between his pale swollen lips and gestured for a match. Kiyoto feigned disinterest; she found the whiteness of the cigarette between Takakichi's lips pathetic. Takakichi wetted the end of the cigarette and said, "Hey, gimme a match." Kiyoko disgustedly gave him a match, promptly took her suitcase out of the closet and began changing her clothes.
>
> "Hey!"
>
> There was no reply.

"Kiyoko . . ."

"What?"

"How stupid! What are you doing in such a huff?"

Again there was no reply. Kiyoko stood in front of the full-length mirror and began arranging her hair, but she found the scar above her own lip terribly ugly. Takakichi suddenly stood up. He threw the cigarette out the open window onto the street below and stood next to Kiyoko, but he smelled so of the plaster that she said, "What are you doing?" and pushed his body away. Takakichi pushed Kiyoko down on the *tatami*, breathed heavily and brushed her hand away from her chest. She had lied [about Mitsuko's whereabouts] and now having been pushed down like this made her see the poplar tree outside her window like a cloud of blue smoke. The sun was high in the sky, and the dizzying warmth spread through the *tatami*.

"Ba . . . Bastard! What are you doing?! I'll scream, you idiot! Damn you!"

The thread in her shoulder seam was ripped and threatened to tear off. Takakichi's arm closed on Kiyoko's neck like a piece of steel. Dirty spittle gathered on his lips as he glared at her, but she glared back and brought both her hands up to his jaw.

"Stop it! I said stop it . . . Idiot!"

"So I'm stupid and full of shit, eh? You brazen . . ."

Takakichi pushed Kiyoko against the wall with his brawny strength. Pressed underneath Takakichi's thick, heavy chest, Kiyoko shut her eyes, resignedly curled up her body and listened intently to the hot-tempered pounding of his heart. Takakichi's breath was stifling as he brought Kiyoko's face up to his own, but she suddenly drew in her chin and bent backwards, like an owl righting itself, and bit his left cheek with a sharpness that drew a spray of blood.[32]

This violent passage is not unique in the novel. The relatively civilized conversation that Kiyoko has with her neighbor, Kunimune, a few pages later would be unremarkable in a different setting but surrounded as it is by such violence it stands out from the page.[33] The characters seem to take such brutality in stride as an unpleasant but unavoidable part of life.

Another particularly violent passage can be found in the short story "Kuroitseru Sonata" (Kreutzer Sonata, 1949) in which a husband, Kōji, and wife, Namiko, try to deal with their hopeless marriage. The two dislike each other intensely, as is clear in this scene in which they fight about whether to separate:

Namiko stood up and went into the sitting room to close the door to the kitchen. Kōji shook both his hands with rage and said harshly, "You are not human."

"Well, if I am not human, what are you? Less than an animal?

> You'd best start thinking about working instead of torturing the weak [maid] with your wild delusions."
>
> Namiko stood up suddenly. Kōji tripped her and slapped her face as she lay toppled on the floor. She staggered on her knees toward the alcove and pressed her hands to her nose.
>
> "See? See? You are demented. It's you who's the animal." Blood ran from between her fingers. Kōji kicked her firmly in the back at this retort.
>
> "Who's demented? Before you start talking back to me you should consider your own state of affairs. You keep telling me to get to work, get to work—don't you think I want to? It makes me so angry when you act as if work is just out there rolling around like a bunch of loose potatoes!"
>
> Namiko stood up and took a piece of tissue from the dresser to wipe the blood off her fingers. "I'm sure you'd be at peace if you killed me, but I can't be killed so easily. I will hate you the rest of my life."[34]

A few pages later the two fight again with equal ferocity:

> Namiko violently grabbed Kōji's hair as if she meant to tear it from his head. Kōji had his hand around Kiyoko's shoulders and would not let go. Namiko thrust her leg out in the direction of the children and hastily tried to wake them. When her leg thumped into them they cried out as if someone had set fire to them.
>
> Kōji got up suddenly without saying a thing, but he stepped on the hem of the mosquito netting and it came down heavily on his head.
>
> "What're you doing? If you're going to kill me, then please do so! What an outrage! What's all this sweet talk of yours?" Namiko cried.
>
> Kōji kicked Namiko's hip violently as she moved at his feet. An uncontrollable, furious anger boiled up inside of him. He kicked her forcefully two or three times. He stomped on her shoulder and her face with his feet and kicked her some more. The mosquito net came loose on all sides. Namiko howled like a beast and did not fight back. The two children sat and cried frantically in the dark, terror-stricken at their parents' fighting.[35]

The violence here, as in the passage from *Lightning*, is blunt and raw. There is no subtlety in the confrontation, there is no word play, there are no actions that imply a hidden meaning. These scenes have shock value; they are simultaneously so frightful and so seductive that the reader cannot help but be drawn to them. If used too often, they would become distasteful, but Fumiko is generally careful to use them sparingly enough to prevent repelling her readers.

This tendency to describe scenes in a rough manner may be due in part to the influence of Fumiko's impoverished childhood; being the daughter of itinerant peddlers would hardly have taught her refined diction. It may also be due to her experiences as a young woman, particu-

larly those while she was living with her abusive lover, Nomura Yoshiya. Certainly the scenes in which she describes the fights she had with Nomura are quite similar to those above; such as the following scene from *Diary of a Vagabond*:

> When I told him I didn't want him around where I worked, Nomura picked up an ashtray and threw it at my chest. Ashes flew into my eyes and mouth. I felt like my rib bones had been snapped. When I ran away out the door, Nomura grabbed my hair and threw me to the floor. I thought maybe I should pretend to be dead. He kicked me over and over again in the stomach.[36]

Despite the immediate unpleasant sensation the reader may experience when reading such passages, this lack of subtlety, allusion, or innuendo also makes the work more accessible to a general audience, as one need not meditate on possible intricate nuances, nor wade through pages of psychological introspection. This is not to say that all of Fumiko's writing is a litany of blunt narrative; both of the heroines in *Drifting Clouds* and "Late Chrysanthemum" are noted for the subtlety with which Fumiko portrays their emotions, and of course there are plenty of other works in which she displays similar writing skills. However, I think that her avoidance of rumination and adherence to straight description of physical events without the interjection of character's thoughts probably accounts for a good deal of her popularity. Readers who had little patience for pages of intellectual meditation could find immediate gratification in reading Fumiko's fast-paced novels.

Fumiko's blunt language also leaves little room for differing reader interpretations: there is no question that the characters heap abuse and violence upon one another, and that this is what the author wants to convey. She makes no attempt to metaphorize these events, to make them in some way poetic, soft, or lyrical, or to depict them in an abstract manner. Instead, she presents them in the most ingenuous manner possible, her frank voice presenting her audience with the naked truth.

After Nomura left her in 1926, Fumiko supported herself by selling manuscripts and working as a café waitress, but Hirabayashi soon decided to marry Kobori Jinji (1901–1959), a colleague of hers, which left Fumiko without a roommate. She temporarily moved back home to Onomichi and lived with her parents, where she wrote the first draft of the short story "Fūkin to uo no machi" (The Accordion and the Fish Town), which is about her childhood in Onomichi. She soon returned to Tokyo and rented a room with money she earned working as a waitress in Shinjuku. It was then that, while visiting Hirabayashi Taiko's former lover Iida Tokutarō at his home in Hongo, she met a painter named Tezuka Rokubin (1902–1989), the man she would eventually marry.[37]

Rokubin was born January 6, 1902, the second son of a farming family in Nagano Prefecture. When he met Fumiko, he was studying Western-style painting in Tokyo while receiving an allowance from home. He was a quiet and friendly man, quite a contrast to Fumiko's previous lovers. The two were married in December 1926. Years later Rokubin would change his family registry to Fumiko's and take her surname, Hayashi. He also later abandoned his painting career—although he continued to paint recreationally—and devoted himself to promoting his wife's writing career. He managed the family's finances shrewdly enough to amass quite an estate; even after Fumiko's early death in 1951, Rokubin continued to live off estate funds until his own death in 1989. Rokubin was a patient and good-natured man who was able to live with Fumiko's habit of disappearing for days at a time when she set off on trips by herself. All records indicate that the two of them had a happy marriage, despite the amount of time they spent separated; Fumiko almost never traveled with her husband, and she spent quite a bit of time on the road.

In January 1927, Fumiko and Rokubin rented an apartment in Shinjuku. At the time, Rokubin had not quit working yet and was painting theater backdrops. Then in May, they moved again to another rented house in Wadahori. Fumiko's short story "Seihin no sho" (A Record of Honorable Poverty, 1931) was based on the couple's life during this time. In July 1927 Rokubin went to his hometown in Nagano, after which he passed through Onomichi, where he met up with Fumiko, who had arrived there earlier on her own. They went together to visit Okano Gun'ichi (Fumiko's first love), then went to Takamatsu and visited there with Fumiko's parents, Kiku and Kisaburō, for about three weeks.

In October 1928, Fumiko published *Aki ga kitan da* (Autumn Has Come), the first installment of what would later be the novel *Diary of a Vagabond* in the magazine *Nyonin geijutsu* (Women and the Arts). The magazine had been founded in 1928 by Hasegawa Shigure (1879–1941), a playwright and poet.[38] Hasegawa's husband and sponsor of *Women and the Arts*, the writer Mikami Otokichi (1891–1944), had admired a poem of Fumiko's that Hasegawa had earlier published in *Women and the Arts*. Fumiko had given the manuscript of *Autumn Has Come* to an editor in the cultural affairs division at *Yomiuri shinbun* (The Yomiuri News), a man by the name of Hayashi Jōji, but he had thrown it in his desk drawer and not looked at it further. Upon hearing this, Mikami made arrangements for *Women and the Arts* to acquire the manuscript, which was subsequently published and received quite favorably by the readership.[39] More details on the publication history of *Diary of a Vagabond* follow in chapter 2, but here I should like to note that the appearance of *Diary of a Vagabond* marked Fumiko's

true debut as an author. Up until that time she had published a half-dozen poems and short stories in various magazines and newspapers, but few of them were of lasting consequence.[40]

In June 1929, Fumiko published an anthology of her poetry entitled *Ao uma o mitari* (I Saw a Pale Horse). It was the first of eight anthologies she would publish between 1929 and 1939, and it was perhaps the most well known. Fumiko's interest in poetry started when she was quite young, but it was not for her poetry that she later became famous. She persisted in writing poems, though, and perhaps more of her poetry was read as part of her fiction—she often inserted poetry into her prose—than independently. Of the thirty-four poems printed in *I Saw a Pale Horse*, eighteen were originally published as part of *Diary of a Vagabond*.[41] She noted in the prologue of *I Saw a Pale Horse* that all the poems had been published elsewhere before being included in the anthology, but the details of that remain unclear.[42] In any case, *I Saw a Pale Horse* was the result of ten years of writing.[43] The favorable response that both *I Saw a Pale Horse* and *Diary of a Vagabond* received prompted other publishers to solicit Fumiko's manuscripts.

In January 1930, Fumiko made the first of many trips abroad: she and several other women writers went on a lecture tour at the invitation of the Government-General of Taiwan.[44] The travelogues that Fumiko wrote about this trip, "Taiwan fūkei" (The Taiwanese Landscape, 1930), "Taiwan no subuniiru" (A Souvenir from Taiwan, 1930), and "Taiwan o tabi shite" (Traveling in Taiwan, 1930) were the first of many travelogues that she would write in the course of her career. Between 1930 and 1943, Fumiko would make no fewer than a dozen trips abroad and her experiences on those trips became important material for both her travelogues and fiction.

In August 1930, *Diary of a Vagabond* became a bestseller when it was published as part of the *Shin'ei bungaku sōsho* (A Collection of New Literature) series by the publishing house Kaizōsha. With the proceeds from that, Fumiko set off in mid-August on a solo journey to mainland China. She traveled throughout Manchuria and then on to the region around Shanghai, visiting the cities of Harbin, Changchun, Mukden, Fushun, Jinzhou, Sanshili, Dalian, Qingdao, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou en route.[45] She returned to Japan on September 25, 1930. Many sources cite Fumiko's later trip to Paris in 1931 as the treat she gave herself after receiving the proceeds from the publication of *Diary of a Vagabond*, but although the Paris trip was certainly partially financed by those proceeds, it was the trip to China in 1930 that was the immediate reward of her literary success.[46]

Fumiko spent the beginning of 1931 traveling in Japan with her mother and grandmother, publishing various short stories including her

famous "The Accordion and the Fish Town," and attending various conferences. In the end of the year she decided, rather on spur of the moment, to take a trip to France.[47] In early November 1931, at the age of twenty-eight, Fumiko set out on her rail journey to Paris via Korea, Manchuria, Siberia, and Eastern Europe. She arrived in Paris on December 23, 1931, where she stayed, except for a monthlong sojourn in London (January 23–February 25), until May of the following year.

While in Paris, Fumiko attended night school to learn French, although her travelogues from the time indicate that she skipped class often and was not serious about her studies. She also spent a considerable amount of time being a tourist, traveling about to see various famous places in the Paris and London areas. She attended the theater, concerts, and films, and visited art museums, where she was particularly impressed with paintings by Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), Pierre Renoir (1841–1919), Jean Corot (1796–1875), and Maurice Utrillo (1883–1955).[48] Her friends were predominantly from the Japanese expatriate community in Paris, which meant that while she was not very lonely she did not have many native acquaintances. Her fellow expatriates kept her supplied with recent Japanese publications and she took advantage of the free time she had to do considerable leisure reading. She continued to write and send manuscripts to her publishers while she was in France. She generally enjoyed her time in Paris, but the inability to communicate in French beyond the rudimentary level and the strict budget on which she had to live made her want to leave after six months.

By early 1932 she had run out of money and Europe had ceased to interest her all that much; she wrote to her publisher at the magazine *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) and asked for money to pay for passage home. The money was sent, albeit after a small delay. The return trip was also booked on third-class, but this time aboard the Japanese oceanliner, *Haruna-maru*. The ship made stops in Naples and Shanghai, and in the latter port Fumiko had the opportunity to meet the Chinese novelist Lu Xun (1881–1936), about whom she later wrote an essay.[49] Fumiko arrived home in Japan on June 16, 1932.[50] It was quite an adventure; as discussed earlier, Fumiko's foreign language capabilities were limited at best. Moreover, in keeping with her opinion that travel should be done alone, she set out by herself, which is extraordinary considering her gender and the general conservative attitude toward women at the time.[51]

When Fumiko returned to Japan, her writing was very much in demand. Donald Keene notes that, "Indeed, it is probably no exaggeration to say that she was the most popular writer in the country."[52] From her return to Japan to September 1933, she also spent much time traveling domestically, both on lecture tours and for recreation.[53] This

period also marks the first time that Fumiko was financially secure. Proceeds from her writing were finally sufficient to support her and her family; previously she had given what she could to her stepfather, Kisaburō, to support his business ventures, but these had invariably failed, so at this point Fumiko set him up in retirement.[54] She writes in her essay "Chiisaki kyōchi" (Little Viewpoint, 1934) that the feelings she had for her stepfather were not those she had for her mother:

> If I had to make some sort of decent distinction about it, I suppose more than "like" or "dislike" I would have to say that I have begun to feel pity for my stepfather. It is not that I am bothered by the thought of him, but there is nothing I can do about the fact that my affections for him do not match those I have for my mother.[55]

Kisaburō's repeated failures in business, which caused the family to live hand-to-mouth and which later caused Fumiko to feel obligated to send money home even when she herself was living on an extremely constrained budget, contributed to the negative feelings that she had toward him.[56] She had tried to encourage him to retire earlier, but to no avail; Kiku and Kisaburō continued to start new businesses and fail at them until finally they accepted her offer to support them in retirement in early 1933.[57] Mere months later, in November, Kisaburō contracted an acute and fatal case of pneumonia. Kiku moved in with Fumiko and Rokubin, and they lived together—although they moved from residence to residence—until near the end of Fumiko's life.

On September 4, 1933, Fumiko was taken into police custody on suspicion of having promised financial support to the Communist Party.[58] She remained in custody for eight days; it was an experience that she wrote about later in the short story "Yume ichiya" (A Night of Dreams, 1947), in which the heroine is imprisoned for ten days for "thought crimes," although she does not know what she did to bring such a fate upon herself. Through the voice of the heroine, Fumiko ruminates on what "thought" is:

> Just what is "thought"? Is it something you get from someone? Do people have their own thoughts? The thoughts that people have, that's not "thought," but rather each individual's interpretation. Just what is thought?[59]

This shows that Fumiko was thinking about and questioning the legitimacy of the charges against her. Being taken into custody must have been a rude awakening for her, who up until that time had only dabbled in political and philosophical thought. Even during the days when she spent time with the leftist poets, she was never a proponent of one particular school, nor was she ever politically zealous, so being arrested for her political patronage would have been a shock.[60]

One thing which may have lead to and perpetuated her reputation as a political radical was her habit of alluding to big questions or issues in her writing without fleshing out the details of the concern. It is dangerous to try to analyze Fumiko's underlying intent with any great depth, as the author herself was not concerned with the details of the allusion; rather, she was satisfied if her writing contained simply a suggestion of the issue at hand, not a discussion of it. It was as if she wanted the reader to be aware of larger questions in a vague way, a way that would give the illusion of depth and richness without the complication of precise details. She seemed to have a fear of structured ideology, something that may have been a reaction to her earlier days spent associating with the leftist poets, an association that helped get her jailed. Fumiko was not one to be truly interested in academic discussions, but she seemed to take comfort in the knowledge that such discussions existed. She made reference to these discussions through two methods: first, the use of literary and religious allusion; second, the use of broad questions that ask the reader to reconsider commonly held truths.

Fumiko made plenty of literary allusions in her fiction; sometimes characters read famous works, sometimes they recall some lesson they learned while reading foreign works. Like almost any author, Fumiko wrote about what she knew, which means that the literary allusions she made were from books that she herself had read. She mentions in her essays that she was fond of Russian literature, particularly the works of Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), and Fyodor Dostoyevski (1821–1881), and she also enjoyed the works of the French writer Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893) and the German poet Heinrich Heine. Consequently, many of Fumiko's fictional characters read these authors' works. But nowhere in her essays does she explain in detail why she enjoyed these writers' works, nor do her fictional characters demonstrate clearly why they read what they read. Rather, the simple fact that the characters are reading a certain author's work itself satisfactorily demonstrates for Fumiko's purposes what sort of people they are. There is an assumption on Fumiko's part that the reader will appreciate the meaning of the reference without further explication.

A good example of this can be found in the novel *Mukuge* (Rose of Sharon, 1949), in which much is made of the titles of the books that the characters read, but little is said of the books' contents. *Rose of Sharon* is the story of a young woman, Yōko, who has many different lovers but never seems to be content with any one of them. The one with whom she spends the most time, Nogi, is too intellectual for her tastes. She dislikes sitting at home and waiting for him to come home late from work, so one day as he is leaving for work, he suggests that she read a book while she waits: