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Uno/Love of Mountains

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PREFACE

Uno Kōji (1891–1961) was a well-known and significant writer who is generally associated with an era in Japanese literature that began after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) and lasted until the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923.

He came to the fore at a time when the dominance of literary realism, established in the first decade of the century, was being contested by literature of a more aesthetic and experimental nature. Uno was one of those younger writers who challenged the orthodoxy of descriptive realism.

While he is generally associated with a group of men regarded as the second generation of naturalist writers (owing largely to his affiliation with Waseda University, the center of literary naturalism), his writing was marked by a playfulness and a critical self-consciousness that departed from the serious self-absorption that characterized the writings of many naturalists, including those of the Waseda *Kiseki* (Miracle) coterie.

Indeed, if the naturalists' contribution had been the attempt to describe phenomenal reality objectively, Uno's was to pull readers back to an awareness of the medium in which those writers worked. He reminded his audience that the reality they found in novels was one created of words possessing a different ontological status from that of the events purportedly described, and he thus confirmed the distinction between art and life at a time when many readers read novels as if the two were interchangeable.

The techniques Uno used to satirize the seriousness of modern Japanese literature are illustrated in the two well-known works translated in this volume: "In the Storehouse" (*Kura no naka*, 1919) and "Love of Mountains" (*Yamagoi*, 1922).

The reader of Japanese may notice that my translations do not always strictly follow the sentence order or even the paragraphing of the original texts. On many occasions I shortened sentences and broke up paragraphs to convey more effectively

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what I believe to be the essential aspects of Uno's writing—namely, its ludic, humorous, and especially critical quality.

There are a number of individuals whose answers to my questions helped me along the way and whose help I acknowledge with gratitude. I would like to thank especially my editor, Sharon Yamamoto, for her patience and promotion of these translations and Gene Carvalho for carefully checking their technical accuracy. And foremost I would like to thank Professor Edwin McClellan, who introduced me to Uno Kōji and the literary culture in which he lived and wrote.

Work on this book was subsidized in part by a Northeast Asia Council Research Travel Grant and grants received from Gustavus Adolphus College and the University of Kansas.