

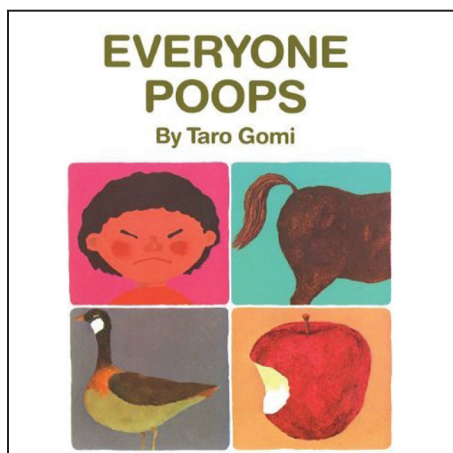


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The Search for a Japanese Children's Book Writer

by Emanuel Murdoch



When I first read *Are You an Echo?*, I kept thinking about how few Japanese children's books there are out there. Do I even know any? Do you? And then I realized that I do know of one Japanese author, and he's AWESOME! His name is Taro Gomi.

Taro Gomi wrote the very funny book *Everyone Poops*, which teaches us how different types of creatures poop—an elephant makes a big poop and a mouse makes a small poop. He doesn't get too specific; after all, the book is meant for little kids. The most important message in the

book is that if you eat, you poop—and so does everybody else. Cool. Message received, Taro Gomi!

What appealed to me about Taro Gomi is, in part, that his was one of the first Japanese children's books to be sold in America. *Everyone Poops*, which is amazingly still popular today, was first published in 1977. What I also love about Taro Gomi's work is that it's light and funny; it appeals to kids of all ages, and even to adults!

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Like Gomi's work, Misuzu Kaneko's poetry also appeals to both children and adults. But I felt that Kaneko's poetry, like the story of her life, is rather sad—beautiful and thoughtful, but still sad.

After learning about Misuzu Kaneko's life, I was curious to learn about Taro Gomi's life, so I began searching the Internet. I searched high and low, but there's not a whole lot of information on Taro Gomi out there. I found his website, but it's in Japanese. No problem, I found an online translator to help me with that! But it turns out that his website doesn't tell any more about Gomi's life than I could find in English.

Here's what I could find: Gomi was born in 1945 and lives in Tokyo, Japan. He is an award-winning author and illustrator. He studied art in the Kuwazawa Design Institute and worked as a designer before getting into picture books. Gomi has produced more than 450 books in his career. More than 50 of those were translated into other languages and sold to different countries across the world.

Taro Gomi's art is very simple and many of his illustrations look like something a kid could've drawn. He uses bright colors and his characters have simple shapes without a lot of detail or shading.

I've seen a few of his other books, like *My Friends* and *Over the Ocean*. They are cute and funny. But none of them are as funny or interesting as *Everyone Poops*.

