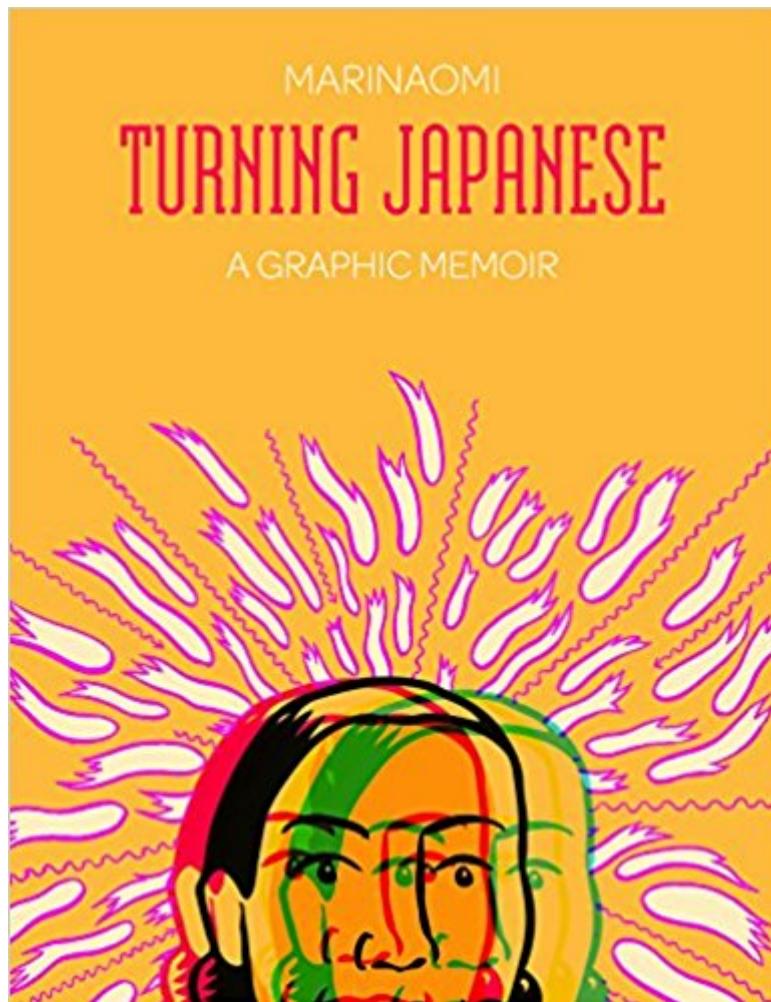


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# Turning Japanese



## Synopsis

MariNaomi's newest graphic novel tours the mid-90's US and Japanese illegal hostess bar scene and her own personal cultural awakening. "The best comic about being Asian American in Japan. Like *Fun Home* and *Persepolis*, *Turning Japanese* is at once modest and grand. MariNaomi is a master of the small, intimate moments that build to a surprisingly emotional climax." - Jason Shiga, Ignatz and Eisner Award-winner "In *Turning Japanese*, Mari's unflinching honesty, open heart, and hard-earned wisdom challenges us to embrace the unexpected detours that unfold in our own lives." - Yumi Sakugawa, author of *Your Illustrated Guide to Becoming One with the Universe* In 1995, twenty-two-year-old Mari had just exited a long-term relationship, moving from Mill Valley to San Jose, California. Soon enough, she falls in love, then finds employment at a hostess bar for Japanese expats, where she is determined to learn the Japanese language and culture. *Turning Japanese* is a story about otherness, culture clashes, generation gaps, and youthful impetuosity. MariNaomi is the author and illustrator of the SPACE Prize-winning graphic memoir *Kiss & Tell: A Romantic Resume, Ages 0 to 22* (Harper Perennial, 2011), the Eisner-nominated *Dragon's Breath and Other True Stories* (2dcloud/Uncivilized Books, 2014), and her self-published *Estrus Comics* (1998 to 2009). Her work has appeared in over sixty print anthologies, and has been featured on such websites as the *Rumpus*, the *Weeklings*, Los Angeles Review of Books, *Midnight Breakfast*, *Truthout*, *XOJane*, *Buzzfeed*, *Bitch Media*, and more. Mari's work on the *Rumpus* won a SPACE Prize and an honorable mention in Houghton Mifflin's Best American Comics 2013.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

MariNaomi is the author and illustrator of the SPACE Prize-winning graphic memoir *Kiss & Tell: A Romantic Resume, Ages 0 to 22* (Harper Perennial, 2011), the Eisner-nominated *Dragon's Breath and Other True Stories* (2dcloud/Uncivilized Books, 2014), and her self-published *Estrus Comics* (1998 to 2009). Her work has appeared in over sixty print anthologies, and has been featured on such websites as The Rumpus, The Weeklings, LA Review of Books, Midnight Breakfast, Truth-out, XOJane, Buzzfeed, Bitch Media, and more. Mari's work on the Rumpus won a SPACE Prize and an honorable mention in Houghton Mifflin's Best American Comics 2013. MariNaomi's artwork has been featured in such venues as the De Young Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco's Asian American Museum and the Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles. In 2011, Mari toured with the literary roadshow Sister Spit. She is also the creator and curator of the Cartoonists of Color Database and the LGBTQ Cartoonists Database.

An interesting read for those curious about Japanese culture (me) and probably people in search of their own Japanese roots and identity (not me). The main character is a bit of a caricature of a millennial which makes her a little annoying at times and the graphics are too simplistic to my taste (I know it's intentional), but the search of identity is portrayed very convincingly.

Thank you so much for another touching, sincere, well crafted book! Mari has a marvelous way of not over-sentimentalizing while still being poignant and engaging. You'll treasure every page. Buy this book!

I LOVED this book. The art is amazing as it always is but MariNaomi hits on so many feelings I've had as a half Japanese girl. I loved it.

brilliant, beautiful.

Interesting bio, but average in story vs. a *Fun Home*

I picked this book up and wound up reading the entire thing in one day, as Mari Naomi's storytelling really pulls you into the narrative. I did so without being as familiar with Naomi's work as I would like, but knowing her work from various comics expos where I'd seen her talk. Overall, I really enjoyed *Turning Japanese* - it grabbed my interest right away and showed the author's talent for the comics

medium. The visuals range from very simple to fairly complex, but they do so in the flow of the story - to draw attention to different elements and keep you moving through the autobiographical story. I think my favorite parts were the moments where Naomi used a strangely distorted perspective to draw specific places - It really gave a sense of the author's worldview and set apart those moments from the rest of the story. I highly recommend picking up this story of personal revelations by a really great contemporary comics creator.

It took me a while to get through this one. I felt she had all the bones of a great memoir, but the substance or takeaways of her experiences didn't always come through. Scenes or thoughts would often kind of trail off or end abruptly, which felt unsatisfying. That plus the overall slow pacing made this a boring, unfulfilling read. Though I did appreciate many of the peeks into everyday Japanese life.

A fantastic memoir about exploring cultural identity, travel, and family. Readers interested in seeing Japan from a unique point of view will enjoy this work immensely. Gorgeous art too!

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