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Big in Japan: A (Hungry) Ghost Story (Kami Books)

M. Thomas Gammarino

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“From Susie Wong to Madame Butterfly to Miss Saigon: you might think that we've had enough of American men adventuring, scoring, and coming undone in the Far East. But you'd be wrong. Gammarino's *Big in Japan* is a shrewd and lively book, sharp-eyed and unsparing in its account of a young American's good and very bad moments overseas. The writing is wired and the ultimate judgement is merciless. It's seductive and it's devastating.” —PF Kluge, author of *Eddie and the Cruisers* and *Gone Tomorrow*

While playing to lackluster crowds in their hometown of Philadelphia, progressive rock band Agenbite clings to the comforting half-truth that they're doing better in Japan. When their manager agrees to send them over on a shoestring tour, though, they're swiftly forced to give up their illusions and return stateside.

All but one of them, that is.

Brain Tedesco, the band's obsessive-compulsive nerve center, has fallen in love with a part-time sex worker - the first woman ever to have touched him - and his illusions have only just begun. What ensues is a gritty coming-of-age tale in which Brain, intent on achieving some kind of transcendence, paradoxically (or not so paradoxically) descends into the Hungry Ghost realm of Tokyo’s underworld. He becomes, in effect, a *gaki* - the insatiable creature of Buddhist cosmology - and must learn how to live even as his outsize desires threaten to engulf him.

By turns compassionate and ruthless, erotic and grotesque, riotously serious and deadly funny, *Big in Japan* is a sparking, gut-wrenching, face-melting debut novel.

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