

## Black Blizzard

Yoshihiro Tatsumi

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**Yoshihiro Tatsumi : Black Blizzard** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Black Blizzard:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not your average Tatsumi storyBy LittleNeutrinoI am quite familiar with Tatsumi's work, but this gem from the 50's is an entirely different, surprising animal. It's has more to do with noir fiction, as it does not portray the often bleak lives of working-class japanese people during the 60's and 70's. The drawing style is also quite different: although quite good, it still had not reached maturity. A very well-told story with a surprising twist, worth every penny!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It may be old, but it's still great!By Jeff ThomasonThe story begins with a man playing the piano only to be arrested by a cop who has been looking for him. He finds himself on a train handcuffed to another accused. The train derails and they escape with the police hot on their trail. This may not sound like the most original plot, but remember, it was originally printed in

1956, and at the time was quite cutting edge for comics in the 50s. *Black Blizzard* still holds up well over 50 years later! The art is simple, but the storytelling is strong. There are several twists and unexpected turns that held my interest. And the colored pages at the beginning was a nice change from the usual all black white manga. If you are a fan of solid story telling, you'll enjoy *Black Blizzard*. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Brian A wonderful read from a classic author of his art. Glad I was recommended this piece.

THE PREEMMINENT GEKIGA-KA'S FIRST GRAPHIC NOVEL FROM FIFTY YEARS AGO Created in the late 1950s, *Black Blizzard* is Yoshihiro Tatsumi's remarkable first full-length graphic novel and one of the first published examples of Gekiga. Tatsumi documented how his love for Mickey Spillane and hard-boiled crime novels led him to create this landmark genre of manga in his epic, critically acclaimed 2009 autobiography, *A Drifting Life*. With *Black Blizzard*, Tatsumi explores the dark underbelly of his working-class heroes that five decades later has made him one of the best-known Japanese cartoonists in North America. Susumu Yamaji, a twenty-four-year-old pianist, is arrested for murder and ends up handcuffed to a career criminal on the train that will take them to prison. An avalanche derails the train and the criminal takes the opportunity to escape, dragging a reluctant Susumu with him into the blizzard raging outside. They flee into the mountains to an abandoned ranger station, where they take shelter from the storm. As they sit around the fire they built, Susumu relates how love drove him to become a murderer. A cinematic adventure story, *Black Blizzard* uncovers an unlikely love story and an even unlikelier friendship.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Penned, paneled, and illustrated in just 20 days by one of the architects of the gekiga (dramatic pictures) movement in Japan, this is a prototypical work of visual pulp fiction. Two convicts escape a train wreck while handcuffed to each other. As they flee the authorities, it quickly becomes evident that one of them must sacrifice a hand in order for them to escape. Neither is willing; one man is a card shark, the other a pianist. The story and layout of the graphics are simple, and the artwork is even crude at times. With a cinematic use of perspective, intensified via the characters and their circumstances, Tatsumi constructs a thrilling narrative with emotional depth. Originally published in 1956, when Tatsumi was only 21, *Black Blizzard* was one of his most innovative long-form stories. At the time, the story was forward thinking for comics and exhibited the ability of the visual narrative to act as a reading experience and a more sophisticated form of entertainment. The story was an achievement for Tatsumi and a cornerstone for the current genre of seinen manga. Any fan of Tatsumi, crime noir, or art house manga will want a copy of this. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Gr 10 Up Part of a line of classic reprints by a renowned manga creator, this early work evokes the visual and structural conventions of film noir. A depressed pianist, unable to remember if he murdered the father of the woman he loves, escapes from his prison train into a blizzard while chained to a career criminal. There are many strands of suspense: Is the protagonist a murderer? Will they escape the police? Will his companion chop off his hand in order to free them from their chains? It is difficult to accept the tension of each of these circumstances. The constant howling of the winter wind and the bleakness that the characters must navigate suitably instills a sense of hopelessness, and the criminal companion looks constantly ready to commit violence. However, this is also part of the difficulty, as the facial expressions are reduced to minor abstractions. The lack of expressive detail prevents a degree of engagement with the inner drama of the characters and instead reduces them to stock figures. The concluding expository coincidence doesn't help in this regard, and could leave readers feeling slightly cheated. Created in 1956, *Black Blizzard* is part of the Silver Age of American comics, and while its sense of storytelling and structure seems more cinematic than corresponding U.S. crime comics, the figure work may not be appreciated without historical perspective. Benjamin Russell, Belmont High School, NH Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. From Booklist Before he invented gekiga a naturalistic style of manga aimed at adults rather than children Tatsumi had his first artistic breakthrough at age 21 with this 1956 thriller about a pair of escaped prisoners handcuffed together: a sensitive concert pianist convicted of a drunken killing that he can't remember, and a brutal multiple murderer. As depicted in the autobiographical *A Drifting Life* (2009), Tatsumi drew *Black Blizzard* in a creative frenzy, creating the 127-page work in just 20 days. The breakneck pace of its creation gives the tale its propulsive, desperate tone. Much of its visceral power comes from the stark simplicity of the drawings; the rough visual approach, a necessary outcome of the story's hasty production, propels the melodramatic storyline. A standout sequence where the fugitives flee pursuers in the titular snowstorm displays Tatsumi's early command of his medium, although the abrupt happy denouement is all the more jarring in light of the unrelentingly despairing tone of his later works. Although a far cry from Tatsumi's psychologically astute, emotionally nuanced gekiga stories, this Nipponese noir augurs the revolutionary works that were yet to come. --Gordon Flagg