Praised by younger writers like Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, Kawabata Yasunari, and Mishima Yukio, Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939) is today one of the most challenging of modern Japanese novelists to read, much less translate into a foreign language. His prose style is one of enchantment: as Nakajima Atsushi put it, it has the effect of a narcotic like heroin, taking the reader into an altered state of consciousness. Using examples from his own translation of the story, in this lecture the speaker will focus on Sanjaku-kaku (“Three Feet Square,” 1898) and its sequel Kodama (“Echo”) to explore how, through language, Kyōka makes the lost world of late-nineteenth century Fukagawa come alive.


This hybrid lecture will be held on site (email required in advance) and via Zoom (meeting ID: 840 2211 1804).