

Japan Dreams: notes from an unreal country

Mark Peters



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A traveller comes to Japan and is slowly absorbed into a complex and increasingly unnerving interplay of reality, representation, substitution, the virtual, the artificial, the counterfeit and the unreal. In form, 'Japan Dreams' is loosely modelled on 'Pillow Book' by Sei Shonagon and 'As I crossed a bridge of dreams' by Lady Sarashina, both written c. 1000 AD. The narrative moves between travelogue, meditation, exploration of ideas, discourse on various subjects, dreams, lists, and introspection. Fact and fiction become harder to separate as the story unfolds. What starts as straightforward documentary metamorphoses into chaotic self-absorption, and the reader is left examining the very same question examined by the narrator: is this real?

A very personal first-person account, 'Japan Dreams' touches on numerous aspects of Japanese culture: arts and heritage, attitudes to time and space, sexuality, language, technology, media, entertainment, identity and self, values, family, city and country life, and religion.

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