ForeWord Reviews

THRILLER

Subduction
Todd Shimoda
Linda J. Shimoda, illustrator
Chin Music Press
978-0-9844576-7-0
(May 29, 2012)

Endo is a young physician beginning his residency when an otherwise healthy woman recovering from a simple knee operation dies on his watch. A blood test he wanted to perform could have saved her life by identifying a burst appendix, but the head resident forced a diagnosis and prescribed morphine instead. One does not argue with one's superiors, but occasionally one is forced to take the fall for them, and Endo soon finds himself exiled to a tiny medical clinic on Marui-jima, a flyspeck of an island off the tip of Japan.

Upon arrival, Endo a meets a few people his own age, a seismologist and documentary filmmaker among them. He discovers that the island is not only small but earthquake prone as well. Sitting squarely over the subduction zone where the North American plate slides under the Asian plate is hazardous enough, but the nearby Philippine and Eurasion plates add pressure to the region. When scientists notice increasing seismic activity, they convince government officials to order an evacuation, yet elderly residents hoping to resurrect their failed fishing industry refuse to go. Worse, they're suspicious of Endo and his fellow newcomers.

Jealousies, secrets, and the mysterious death of the seismologist turn what could have been a boring assignment at a remote clinic into quite an adventure. As Endo uncovers a history of violence and tribulations amongst the island's people, he faces dangers he could never have foreseen. And that's just from the residents. Husband-and-wife team Todd and Linda Shimoda's skills blend seamlessly together to make *Subduction* a hauntingly beautiful and highly unique novel. The author's prose and illustrator's talent give the book a tone and quality that is both rare and memorable.

Todd won the 2010 Elliot Cades Award for Literature, the highest literary honor in the state of Hawaii. Of his previous novels, *Oh!* was named an NPR summer best read and a notable book by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. *The Fourth Treasure* was translated into six languages and named a notable book by the Kiriyama Prize. He was born and raised in Colorado and lives in Hawaii and California. His PhD in science and mathematics education is from the

University of California, Berkeley.

Linda is an accomplished artist, illustrator, and book designer. In addition to many other venues and publications, her work has appeared in her husband's novels *365 Views of Mt. Fuji*, *The Fourth Treasure*, and *Oh!*. Linda's traditional Japanese-style brushwork adds a dynamic visual layer to the stories, in this instance a sixteen-page illustrated retelling of the myth of Kashima, the Japanese god who controls a giant, thrashing catfish that causes earthquakes (and offers clues to the mysterious motives of the island's residents).

Lawrence Kane