

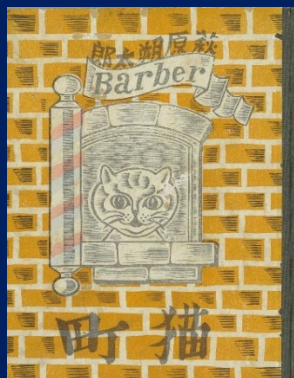
## *Cat Town (Nekomachi) : Sakutaro and Setagaya*



In 1931, Sakutaro moved with his family to Shimokitazawa, Setagaya, and two years later built a new house in Daita as his final residence. There is a short story he wrote in this area, called *Cat Town* (Hangaso, 1935). In this story, the strange experiences of the main character, who gets lost in a “town where only the spirits of cats live”, are expressed in a subtle, sharp style.

“Look and you see huge groups of cats swarming and filling the city streets. Cats, cats, cats, cats, cats, cats. Wherever you look, all you can see is cats.” (*Cat Town*)

The novel opens with the main character, who has lost interest in traveling, catching a glimpse of a dreamlike scene in a nearby town. As a result of losing his sense of direction, an illusion is made of the usual town scenery, and he believes he has strayed into an unfamiliar town. After that, he realizes that the cause of his confusion was “one thing having two separate “faces” by changing the direction of one’s line of sight”. The image of the main character, who fantasizes another world beyond the scenery of everyday reality, overlaps with Sakutaro’s own path in poetry.



*Cat Town* (1935, Hangaso. Cover art: Sumio Kawakami. Book design: Sakutaro Hagiwara)