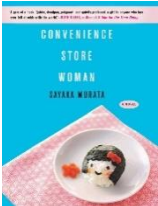
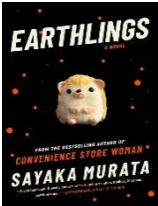
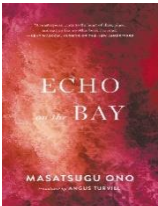
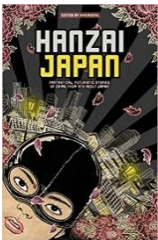
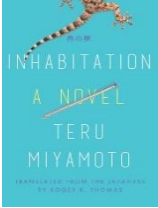
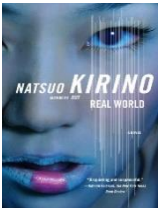
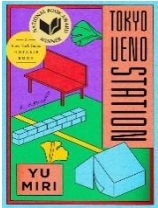


The Japan Foundation, Toronto Library books from JFT's Book Club.

The Japan Foundation, Toronto Library Book Club

Books discussed during The JFT Library Book Club Online – Bring Your Own Book (April 9, 2021)

	Title	Author
	Convenience Store Woman	Murata, Sayaka
	<p><i>Convenience Store Woman</i> is the heartwarming and surprising story of thirty-six-year-old Tokyo resident Keiko Furukura. Keiko has never fit in, neither in her family, nor in school, but when at the age of eighteen she begins working at the Hiromachi branch of "Smile Mart," she finds peace and purpose in her life. In the store, unlike anywhere else, she understands the rules of social interaction—many are laid out line by line in the store's manual—and she does her best to copy the dress, mannerisms, and speech of her colleagues, playing the part of a "normal" person excellently, more or less. Managers come and go, but Keiko stays at the store for eighteen years. It's almost hard to tell where the store ends and she begins. Keiko is very happy, but the people close to her, from her family to her coworkers, increasingly pressure her to find a husband, and to start a proper career, prompting her to take desperate action...</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>	
	Earthlings	Murata, Sayaka
	<p>As a child, Natsuki doesn't fit in with her family. Her parents favor her sister, and her best friend is a plush toy hedgehog named Piyyut, who talks to her. He tells her that he has come from the planet Popinobopia on a special quest to help her save the Earth. One summer, on vacation with her family and her cousin Yuu in her grandparents' ramshackle wooden house in the mountains of Nagano, Natsuki decides that she must be an alien, which would explain why she can't seem to fit in like everyone else. Later, as a grown woman, living a quiet life with her asexual husband, Natsuki is still pursued by dark shadows from her childhood, and decides to flee the "baby factory" of society for good, searching for answers about the vast and frightening mysteries of the universe—answers only Natsuki has the power to uncover.</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>	
	Echo on the Bay	Ono, Masatsugu
	<p>All societies, whether big or small, try to hide their wounds away. In this, his Mishima Prize-winning masterpiece, Masatsugu Ono considers a fishing village on the Japanese coast. Here a new police chief plays audience for the locals, who routinely approach him with bottles of liquor and stories to tell [...] just out of frame, the chief's teenage daughter is listening, slowly piecing the locals' accounts together, reading into their words and poring over the silence they leave behind. As accounts of horrific violence—including a dangerous attempt to save some indentured Korean coal mine workers from the Japanese military police and the fate of a group of Chinese refugees—steadily come into focus, she sets out for the Bay, where the tide has recently turned red and an ominous boat from the past has suddenly reappeared.</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>	
	Hanzai Japan: Fantastical, Futuristic Stories of Crime From and About Japan	Mamatas, Nick (editor) Masumi Washington (editor)
	<p>A murderer doing time in hell. A girl who just wants to win her high school band contest...no matter what it takes. Sumo wrestlers with a supernatural secret. A future Tokyo where vampires are menial laborers nursing long-held grudges against humanity. And even a very conscientious, if unstable, Universal Transverse Mercator projection. These crime and mystery stories from and about Japan explore myth, technology, the sharpness of a sleuth's mind, and the darkness in the hearts of criminals. Read these stories and learn that <i>hanzai</i> means crime!</p>	

	<p>Inhabitation</p>	<p>Miyamoto, Teru</p> <p>In 1970s Osaka, college student Tetsuyuki moves into a shabby apartment to evade his late father's creditors. But the apartment's electricity hasn't been reconnected yet, and Tetsuyuki spends his first night in darkness. Wanting to hang up a tennis cap from his girlfriend, Yōko, he fumbles about in the dark and drives a nail into a pillar. The next day he discovers that he has pierced the body of a lizard, which is still alive. He decides to keep it alive, giving it food and water and naming it Kin. <i>Inhabitation</i> unfolds from there, following the complications in Tetsuyuki's relationship with Yōko, a friendship with his supervisor who hides his heart disease at work, and his father's creditors, always close on his heels. Daunted, Tetsuyuki speaks to Kin night after night, and Kin's peculiarly tortured situation reflects the mingled pain, love, and guilt that infuses Tetsuyuki's human relationships.</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>
	<p>Real World</p>	<p>Kirino, Natsuo</p> <p>In a crowded Tokyo suburb, four teenage girls indifferently wade their way through a hot, smoggy summer. When one of them, Toshi, discovers that her next door neighbor has been brutally murdered, the girls suspect the killer is the neighbor's son. But when he flees, taking Toshi's bike and cell phone with him, the four girls get caught up in a tempest of dangers that rise from within them as well as from the world around them. Psychologically intricate and astute, <i>Real World</i> is a searing, eye-opening portrait of teenage life in Japan unlike any we have seen before.</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>
	<p>Tokyo Ueno Station</p>	<p>Yu, Miri</p> <p>Kazu is dead. Born in Fukushima in 1933, the same year as the Japanese Emperor, his life is tied by a series of coincidences to the Imperial family and has been shaped at every turn by modern Japanese history [...] Kazu's life in the city began and ended in that park; he arrived there to work as a laborer in the preparations for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and ended his days living in the vast homeless village in the park, traumatized by the destruction of the 2011 tsunami and shattered by the announcement of the 2020 Olympics [...] <i>Tokyo Ueno Station</i> is a book for our times and a look into a marginalized existence in a shiny global megapolis.</p> <p>Borrow from JFT OverDrive</p>

*Book descriptions from OverDrive and Amazon.ca