



Almost Transparent Blue

By Ryu Murakami

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Almost Transparent Blue is a brutal tale of lost youth in a Japanese port town close to an American military base. Murakami's image-intensive narrative paints a portrait of a group of friends locked in a destructive cycle of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. The novel is all but plotless, but the raw and often violent prose takes us on a rollercoaster ride through reality and hallucination, highs and lows, in which the characters and their experiences come vividly to life. Trapped in passivity, they gain neither passion nor pleasure from their adventures. Yet out of the alienation, boredom and underlying rage and grief emerges a strangely quiet and almost equally shocking beauty. Ryu Murakami's first novel, *Almost Transparent Blue* won the coveted Akutagawa literary prize and became an instant bestseller. Representing a sharp and conscious turning away from the introspective trend of postwar Japanese literature, it polarized critics and public alike and soon attracted international attention as an alternative view of modern Japan.

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Almost Transparent Blue By Ryu Murakami Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #393395 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Kodansha USA
- Published on: 2003-04-11
- Original language: Japanese
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.20" h x .50" w x 7.40" l, .42 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 128 pages

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