

**GROUND ZERO,**

**NAGGA**

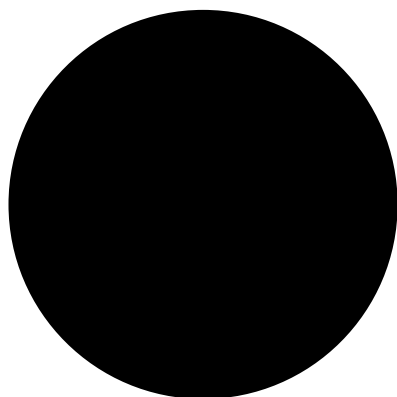


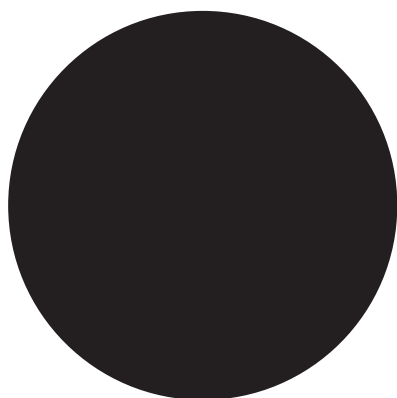
**SAKI**

s t o r i e s

**SEIRAI YŪICHI**

**GROUND ZERO,  
NAGASAKI**





**GROUND ZERO,**

**NAGGA**



**SAKI**

stories

**SEIRAI YŪICHI**

Translated by **PAUL WARHAM**

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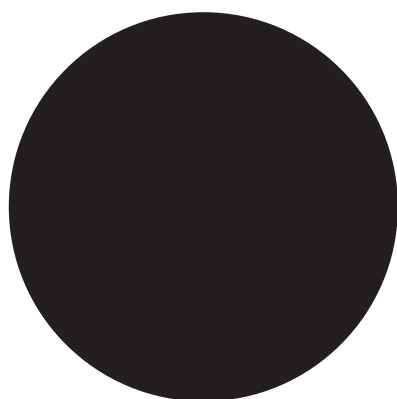
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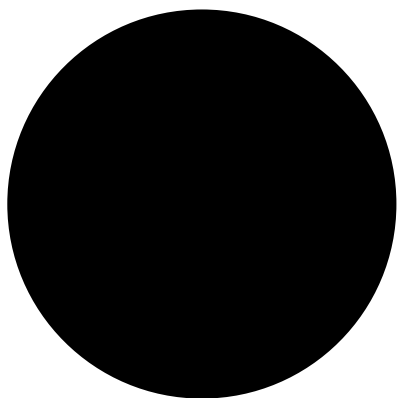
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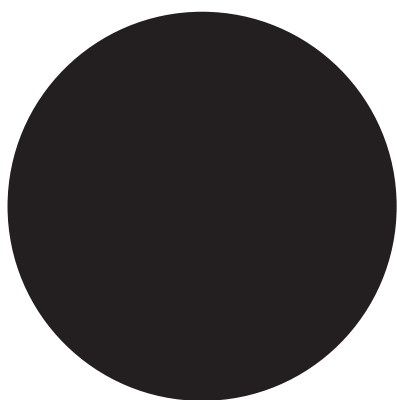
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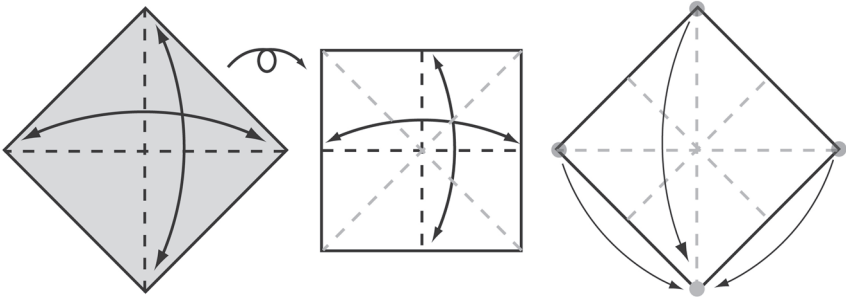


**GROUND ZERO,  
NAGASAKI**









## NAILS

The snow that had been falling all afternoon had stopped at last, but patchy clouds of black and gray still covered the sky like warts on the walls of a limestone cave. It looked as though it might start snowing again at any moment. My wife stood with her head hung low, her fingers knitted together over her chest. Her silhouette shaded into the thick gloom of the evening.

The domed belfry of the cathedral was still just about visible over the crest of the gentle hill that stretches out in front of the house. My wife has always claimed that this plot of land, with its views of the church windows glinting in the morning light, is a sacred place. She's prayed here every day, morning and night, since we were married. It broke her heart when she had to stop going to church after what happened with our son.

I hurried across to the cottage storehouse on the grounds, with the crowbar and mallet in one hand. The mud had frozen solid, and the ice crunched beneath my sneakers.

"You found them?" my wife called out, unlocking her fingers slowly and letting her hands fall to her side.

"Under the veranda."

The crowbar was flecked with red rust like scales on a fish. I'd felt a shudder run through me as I took the bar in my hand. I was about to expose what our son had gone to such efforts to hide. It made my heart ache. He insisted that he had never meant to do Kiyomi any harm. He just wanted to expose the truth, he