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Afternoon Breezes

Japan 1980. Dir: Hitoshi Yazaki. Prod: Shunichi Nagasaki. Script: Hitoshi Yazaki, Shunichi Nagasaki. Photo: Tsutomu Ishii, Harayoshi Komatsu. Cast: Setsuko Aya, Naomi Ito. 105 mins.

Produced and co-scripted by Shunichi Nagasaki and directed by his former assistant Hitoshi Yazaki, *Afternoon Breezes* offers the cinema's most incredible and moving account of lesbian obsession since *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. Natsuko nurses a helpless crush on her room-mate Mitsu and tries to possess her for herself by generating conflict between Mitsu and her boyfriend, Hideo. Mitsu discovers what is happening and throws Natsuko out of the apartment. But Natsuko cannot bring herself to sever the one-way emotional bond. Filmed with exceptional delicacy and restraint and acted with great psychological acuity, *Afternoon Breezes* is an astonishingly mature achievement for its very young cast and crew. It was inspired by a newspaper story, but its sense of reality is wholly subjective: the people and places around Natsuko are drained of inner life, reduced to objects in her obsessive gaze. Atmosphere and rhythm count for everything; there are no artificial injections of 'drama'. This will be the film's first screening outside Japan. — *Tony Rayns*.