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Written over the course of 1904-6, Soseki's comic masterpiece, *I Am a Cat*, satirizes the follies of upper-middle-class Japanese society during the Meiji era. With acerbic wit and sardonic perspective, it follows the whimsical adventures of a world-weary stray kitten who comments on the follies and foibles of the people around him.

The New Yorker called it "a nonchalant string of anecdotes and wisecracks, told by a fellow who doesn't have a name, and has never caught a mouse, and isn't much good for anything except watching human beings in action..."

Born Natsume Kinnosuke, Soseki was brought up in a middle-class family at the beginning of the Meiji period. After an extensive education in English, Chinese, and Japanese literature, Soseki taught English at the University of Tokyo. In 1907, he gave up teaching to devote himself to writing and produced a number of books, including *Botchan*, *The Three-Cornered World*, and *Mon*. He died in Tokyo in 1916.