



LUCILE NICKERSON COLYER

Thy Neighbor

A CRITICAL READING EDITION

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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INTRODUCTION

Grief, friendship, and wartime witness

Lucile Colyer turned a voyage to Japan, the sudden death of her husband, and the friendship that carried her through grief into a book-length protest against wartime racial hatred. Written in plain, direct verse, *Thy Neighbor* follows Japanese and Japanese American friends from shipboard companionship through war, removal, incarceration, military service, and resettlement. Colyer writes as a Los Angeles woman trying to hold onto the people she actually knows while newspapers, government orders, and wartime fear reduce them to an enemy image. The poem can be diffuse, earnest, and repetitive, but that repetition is part of its record: grief becomes a daily practice of attention, and the word “neighbor” is tested against what the country was willing to do. This edition resets the complete six-part 1946 text, restores the two inset letters as prose, preserves the numbered sequence and true stanza divisions, and removes the narrow-page wraps and scanning debris of the digital copy.

Life and Work

Lucile Nickerson Colyer was a Los Angeles poet whose only verified book is *Thy Neighbor*, published by the Willing Publishing Company in 1946. HathiTrust’s authority record gives her birth year as 1890. Her death date, birthplace, parents, education, and full family chronology have not yet been securely documented, and similarly named genealogy entries have not been folded into this record without corroboration.

The book itself supplies the clearest surviving outline of her adult life. Colyer and her husband, whom the poem calls Bob, sailed for Japan aboard the *Asama Maru*. He died suddenly during the voyage. Nanjo San, a purser on the ship, and other Japanese acquaintances helped her through the immediate shock, arranged her stay in Japan, and remained part of the network of friendship she remembered after returning to Los Angeles. The poem also names her son John and records the Japanese American woman Shizue living in

Colyer's home before and during the war.

A December 1946 review in the *Pacific Citizen* identifies Colyer as a Los Angeles resident and reports that she spent much of the war helping Japanese American friends. The poem describes letter writing, shopping, storage, employment contacts, and hospital volunteer work while friends were removed to camps or tried to resettle. A reproduced letter from former ambassador Joseph C. Grew is addressed to Colyer at 202 North Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles.

Colyer built *Thy Neighbor* as both a personal memorial and a public appeal. Grew and the clergyman Albert W. Palmer supplied prefatory letters; Walter R. Carle edited the manuscript and wrote the foreword; Rose Anne Doyle made the jacket and illustrations. The Willing Publishing Company advertised soft green velour and hardbound versions, suggesting that Colyer expected the book to circulate through clubs, churches, and public readings rather than only among poetry readers.

No second book or dependable body of periodical poems has been verified. The most important open questions remain the civil identities of Colyer and her husband, the documentary histories of Nanjo San and Shizue, and the survival of Colyer's correspondence or Willing Publishing Company records. Until those records are found, the biography should remain evidence-led and should not turn the poem's narrative into unsupported fact.

ARCHIVAL IMAGES

The poet and the material history of the 1946 book



The Author

Lucile Colyer, author portrait in the 1946 first edition.

...thy neighbor...

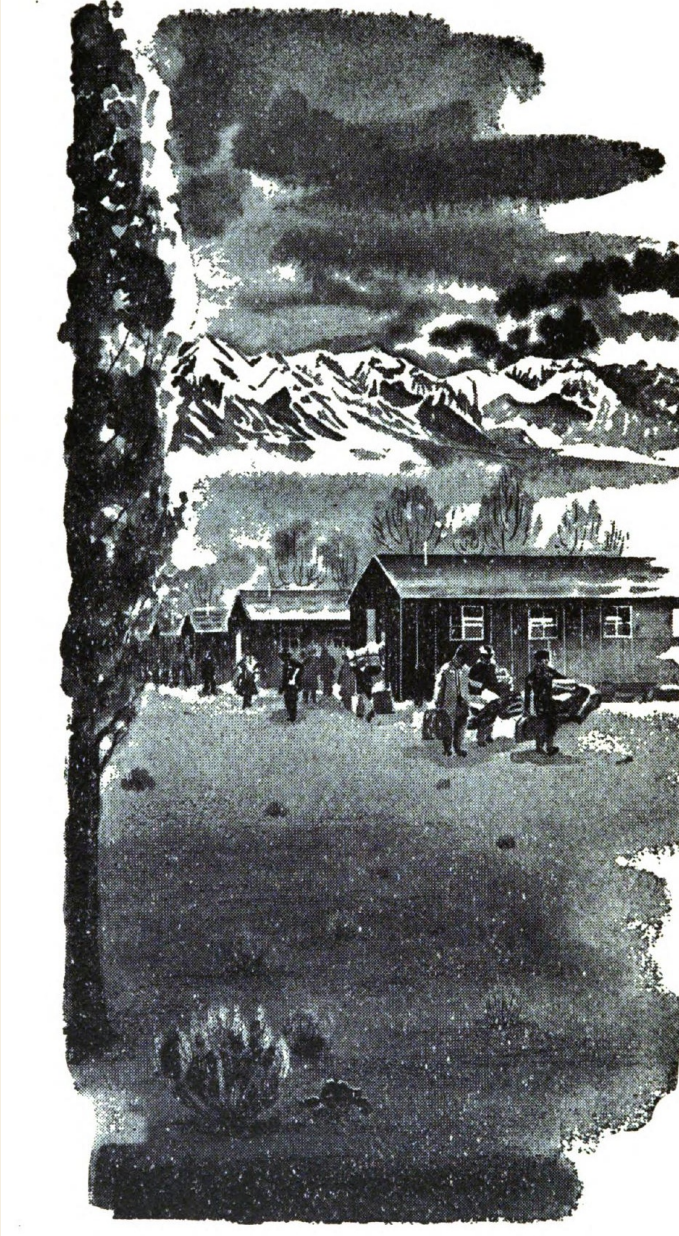
By

Lucile Colyer



**WILLING PUBLISHING COMPANY
3524 NORTH BROADWAY
LOS ANGELES 31, CALIFORNIA**

Original title page of Thy Neighbor (Willing Publishing Company, 1946).



Rose Anne Doyle's illustration of confinement in a hastily constructed camp, from the first edition.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Text, sequence, letters, and reading-text policy

This edition resets the complete six-part poem from the 1946 first edition. Every internal Roman-numeral section is retained in order. True stanza spacing is preserved, while short continuations created only by the narrow source page are rejoined at the poem's base margin.

The two long letters embedded in Parts II and III are prose documents within the poem. Their physical line-end hyphenation and narrow-column wraps have been removed, but their paragraphs, salutations, closings, wording, and punctuation are retained. Italic display distinguishes them from the verse without turning their source wraps into poetic lineation.

The HathiTrust copy supplied both an embedded text layer and page images. The reading text was compared page by page against a second OCR pass; Roman numerals, names, broken words, and low-confidence punctuation were then checked against the images. Obvious scanning debris is silently removed. No conjectural wording has been inserted.

The archival section is deliberately short. It reproduces a cropped author portrait, the original title page, and one of Rose Anne Doyle's first-edition illustrations; HathiTrust and Google border matter is excluded from the crops.

THY NEIGHBOR

The complete 1946 poem

PART I

Nineteen Hundred Forty—Forty-One

I

On the deck of a liner
The lovely Asama Maru
Happy, excited, my husband and I
Are starting a trip we have dreamed of —
A trip we have planned for a year.
We are on our way to the Orient
On our way to visit Japan.
We always have loved Japan.

It is three in the afternoon;
Our son, our friends, are smiling,
Waving goodby.
With serpentine papers descending
Tossed gaily to friends below
The ship makes a beautiful picture
As she slowly begins to move
As she moves away from the shore
Leaving Los Angeles harbor.
Close together we stand at the rail
My hand held tightly in his
As we watch the shores receding;
He looks at me with a whimsical smile
Our thoughts are free from care
We are happy
Together as always
No fear in our hearts
For the future.

We have traveled in Europe
And in the British Isles;
In South America, too.
We have been to Alaska, the inland way
Through Canada

And in every part of our own country,
But never more thrilled than today.

Passengers gather about us
Laughing, talking together
They are on vacation
Or going home —
Home to their native land
Japanese and Americans
Mingling here together
Mingling in perfect harmony
The harmony of friendship.

Teachers and students
From colleges and universities;
Diplomats and missionaries
To India and Japan;
One royal princess is aboard
With her commentator husband
On their way to visit China;
Industrialists in oils and textiles
Interested in transportation, too;
Business men from America and Japan.

And one is there
A wonderful friend she
Becomes to me;
Twenty-five years she has lived in Japan
Now with her children returning
After a year away;
Returning to join her husband.

We mingle each day together —
Together as one family;
All with a definite purpose
A definite schedule to follow
All but my husband and me.
We are enroute just for pleasure
Following where our thoughts lead
Finding joy in each moment.

We are happy just being together;
We have people guessing, too.

They think we are newly married
And on our honeymoon;
We smile at this;
We have lived eighteen years together.
The weather at sea is so perfect
Warmer and warmer each day;
We leave San Francisco behind us ...

Seven days aboard
Seven happy days ...

We're approaching Honolulu;
An American ship has arrived
But a short time there before us;
We are greeted with strains of "Aloha",
As our liner steams into the slip
To which she has been assigned.
Soon the Maru is deserted.

A wonderful day in Hawaii
With its tropical atmosphere;
Driving about the city
And high to its windy hill;
Luncheon at the Royal Hawaiian
The day is soon gone...
We are back on the ship
My husband and I.

Nine days ahead of us
A little floating city
Complete in every detail;
Amusements, games, and reading
Theatre and moving pictures
Dancing every evening
And one suki yaki dinner
Served upon the deck.

Two students of all the students
Traveling to Japan
Seem to be the chosen ones
The ones in most demand.
The girl, a lovely Japanese
Traveling with her father,

Has the stateroom just across
The corridor from ours;
No matter what the time of day
If she is in her room
We have difficulty getting through
The line of students gathered there
American boys and girls ...

The other, a boy, going home to Japan
For the summer ...
He has been at Stanford several years;
No matter where we see him —
No matter what he is doing —
Girls and boys are always there.
American girls and boys;
He is alert and clever
Sophisticated, gay,
Mischievous and witty
And God is smiling from his eyes.

II

Great plans now are in progress.
Tonight is the captain's dinner.
"Twill be a celebration
We shall long remember.
It is the eve of the Fourth of July;
The dining salon is a picture
With streamers of red, white, and blue;
Floral arrangements from Honolulu
Send out sweet perfume.
Miniatures in colored ice
Are placed about the salon.

The day, too, is exciting;
American sports fill each hour;
The deck never is silent;
My husband sits there watching —
Intently absorbed, missing nothing ...

Night is come.

The ship is brightly lighted
All in readiness for dinner
Soon to be.
A hush drifts down upon the ship —
The hush which comes with evening;
We find ourselves descending —
In formal white descending —
To the salon;
I never have seen my husband
Quite so radiant, quite so happy;
He warmly greets the others gathered there ...

At last we are in our stateroom,
Alone together once more.
The smile my husband gives me
Is a smile I oft have seen —
A smile of greatest happiness.
It warms me through and through.
The time?
It is midnight
Aboard the Asama Maru ...

Later, deeply wrapped in slumber,
Dreaming of Japan
Bob and I, together walking
'Neath cherry trees in bloom ...
Peaceful silence now is broken;
The light clicks strangely
In the quiet room.
Quickly I look at my husband;
His face is ashen and gray ...
Somehow I call the doctor
They are leading me away.

Three doctors work together
For hours it seems to me.
Is their skilled efficiency useless?
Is their quiet intensity futile?
Dear God, can it be futile?
I am out in the corridor
Walking,
An angel close beside me;

The purser, quiet, gentle, kind
Never trespassing on my thoughts
Knowing so well what not to say
Helps me to bear this waiting;
Numb and dazed my mind.
"Surely, surely, God will save him
How could I go on without him?"

Now the door swings open slowly,
Shadows moving in the hallway
And a softly whispered message ...

I feel a gentle pressure
From the hand that still is guiding
And I know that Bob has left me;
I know that I'm alone.

III

Morning comes.
I am waking
Waking from a dream;
Everything is strange about me
And I wonder where I am;
Dazed, my thoughts are moving slowly
Groping ...wondering.
When I see beside me, smiling —
God —
In the face of a friend.

Four days more upon this liner —
The liner Asama Maru —
Before we reach Japan;
Never alone for a moment
Yet never intruded upon.
God's Presence always with me
Silently comforting.

My chair is moved to the upper deck
Where vision is unobstructed.
I gaze across the waters
Calm ...quiet...peaceful ...

My wardrobe is moved without question
To the stateroom I have been given
On the opposite side of the ship;
I sit at the purser's table
Two other Americans there
Or I eat on the deck
Wherever I wish
But never left alone.

Cables are sent
Scarce speaking to me
These Japanese friends
Foresee my wants
And fulfill them
With perfect understanding;
Their every kindness
Strengthening my love for them,
And for Japan.

These friends, these neighbors
Aboard this ship
Are the Japanese I love.
The true Japanese
Heart of Japan, pulse of Japan;
The ones I'm remembering always ...

One evening, walking upon the deck
A new-found friend beside me —
A lovely girl, Russian born, comes too,
And falls in step;
Putting her arm around me
She whispers in my ear,
"You are wonderful;
Sorrow weakens the weak
But makes the strong stronger,
And you are strong.
These words I shall remember always;
They strike a hidden chord ...
I straighten under the impact,
My soul reborn.

Four days finally ending

We reach Yokohama harbor,
The harbor we often talked of.
My husband and I.

"How can I go ashore, God?
How can I go, alone?"
Confusion, excitement
Confound me
At thought of going ashore.

Friends are disembarking,
With sympathetic glances
They try so hard to conceal;
I hear a voice speaking low
"I've arranged for you ...
Will you come with me?
You'll not be long alone ."
Turning I see beside me
The face of the purser
My friend, Nanjo San.
Infinite kindness
In his voice ...
In his eyes.

We walk away together
"I've arranged for everything
You've nothing to fear
Friends will be with you and
I will see you soon.

We are going down the gangplank —
A cab is awaiting me
I reach the Grand Hotel
Friends I never have seen
Are there to welcome me
All arranged beforehand
With providential thoughtfulness.

IV

With Americans and Japanese
I spend the night at the Grand Hotel.

I sit at their table, an honored guest
Close beside my very dear friend.
The following day Tokyo —
Hotel Imperial.

From this time until I leave Japan
Everything is arranged for me;
They take me to visit
The temples and shrines.
They have so many there.
I'm driven all about Tokyo
Past the emperor's palace
Through parks and streets that I hardly see ...
Never left alone ...

One day stands out from all the rest
A day in Kamakura
The day I spent with Nanjo San
Walking through a lovely park
Beside a quiet stream
Where swans and goldfish play;
Walking on to see the buddha;
Walking without need for words.
Lunching then with him alone
Where later in the garden
He asks me of my plans.
Is there anything I want to do?
"Home is empty
But I know that I must go
My son and friends are waiting there for me.

Gravely silent, without question
He makes return arrangements.
A canceled reservation
Makes it possible for me to go.
He takes me through the customs,
Speaks for me whenever needed ...
I am going home on the Kamakura Maru
Home

V

When I reach my stateroom
Friends are gathered there;
Flowers, miniature gardens
Everywhere
About the room;
Faces ...faces ...all about me
Full of love and understanding ...
Soon the whistle blows in warning
It is time for them to go.
For the first time since Bob left me
I find myself alone ...
Alone ...
Seventeen days until I'm home.
I rush to the rail to wave goodby
I see my friends below
Waving
Smiling assurance
Sending me strength to bear
What must bear
Alone ...
I see their handkerchiefs waving
They stand upon the dock
Waving, constantly waving,
Now I can see them no more ...
But I shall see them always.

Turning from the rail
Once more I feel alone ...
I hurry to my stateroom ...
Entering I look around me
For a moment frantic.
Then I feel God's Holy Presence
In the quietness about me
In the flowers, in the cables
In the letters lying there
And suddenly I know I'm not alone ...

I know that life goes on
I know life is eternal

I know that I am one
With all God's goodness
As I stand there silently
I feel my husband's presence
In the hush that's all about me ...
In this hush with silent reverence
I recognize my oneness with God.

I realize I am left
It must be for a purpose
The world must need me
Otherwise I would not be here.
I must let my light shine in God's garden ...
"Dear God, tell me what it is that
I'm to do . '

VI

For some moments more I sit here
Thinking of the days ahead a #8
"Unpack your bags,
Put everything away,
Tidy your stateroom,
Read your cablegrams
Keep moving . "
A soft voice speaks within me ...
Unquestioning, I follow its instruction ...
One cable gives great comfort
It is from my son;
"Dad is safe he is well
He has only passed on —
It is of you I am thinking . "

The room is soon in order;
I hear a knock at the door
The purser stands outside;
He greets me; tells me that
A mutual friend
Has left instructions with him
"Everything you wish we'll do for you
Be sure to let us know.

Soon another passenger
With name the same as mine
Brings flowers and letters
That belong to me;
She stays and chats a moment
Tells me their trip was shortened
By a death at home ...

Now it is time for dinner
I've chosen a table alone
On the side of the salon
Where refugees are sitting.
We are friends from the beginning
They have suffered
Suffered deeply.
The Christlike Presence in them
Seeks counterpart in me.

There are many passengers;
Passengers from America
From France
From Germany, England, Russia
From China and Japan;
Business men and women
Diplomats and refugees
Quietly mingling in friendship
Aboard the Kamakura Maru.

One charming woman
A friend so kind to me
Brings books to read
And sits with me upon the deck;
She is sweet and gracious —
The wife of our esteemed
Ambassador to Japan
Lovely Alice Grew.

Each day I go on deck
To the lounge and salon.
There is always someone
To tell me something funny
That has happened on the ship.

Good friends:
Neighbors, too.

VII

I am home
My son and friends are with me
But still am alone;
My husband's presence
Everywhere.
Sitting down to dinner
Each time I pass his chair ...
Walking in the garden
Cutting roses — his roses —
We have them everywhere
Climbing over fences
Over pergolas and trellises
In beds which skirt the house.
Of course ...
He was the type of person
To love roses ...

Friends are kind and thoughtful;
I am going out constantly
But every time when I return
And put away the car
I see my husband standing there ...
"Is it this which
Gives to life
An emptiness a void
The feel of unfulfillment?"
Bob would not want it so
This I know
But what to do?
How best to battle
All the restless loneliness
Of spirit ...
Uncertain
Still somewhat dazed and baffled —
I decide to visit Michigan ...

Waiting at the gate, my son and I,
Before I climb aboard
I hear friends say to me
"You are very calm
For one about to take her
First trip in the air.
They do not know that secretly
I have no fear
If the plane shall fail
In flight ...
I have made full contact
With my God

Only a few weeks in Michigan;
Life seems no different there;
Home again ...

VIII

Time passes
One day
A letter,
Nanjo San is coming
Coming to visit me.
Soon I'm planning
The things I think he'll like
In the short time he is here ...
It is the Christmas season ...
Christmas ...
I think of Him
Who came to Bethlehem
Long ages gone,
And then was sent
Away
Upon a hillside cross
By those
Who did not understand ...

Yes, it is Christmas
Nearly Christmas when he comes
Driving through the pouring rain

Speeding toward the ship to meet him
I am happy
At thought of seeing him again.
"He is here;
I shall see him very soon ...
Like seeing you in person, God.
Through him You came to me
That night upon the ship;
Through him You came and spoke to me
Those loving words of comfort
Words so few
But words
I never can forget.
They stilled my anguish
They brought me peace
I hold them sealed in my heart God,
Where no one can see
But You and me ...
He led me through the shadows
As only You can do ...:
The spirit of the true Japan
He came to help me ...
The spirit of my country
The spirit of the world ...
That is why everyone loves him.
Everyone upon that ship
The ship Asama Maru
Loved to be in his presence
To feel the warmth of his smile,
To hear him speak ...
God, I thank You
For Nanjo San ."

He is standing at the gangplank
As I come upon the ship;
Silently
He greets me
With a smile
A smile that brings me
Peace and happiness.

Luncheon on the ship
The passengers are gone;
He has ordered just the things
I care for most;
He remembered ...

Soon we leave the ship together
Out into the rain.
We do not mind the rain
We are friends
Again together ...

Stopping at a theatre, and late
In our arrival home;
The guests I have invited
Are there before us.
Two Americans
So very fond of Nanjo San
And he, of them.

Opening wide the door, they greet us
Chiding, laughing at our late appearance;
Soon we gather 'round the table
In a warm and friendly room.

They are talking, talking.
Only I
Sit silently
My heart too full for words
They understand, these friends
Friends so close to me;
We are together again

Dinner is over.
We all go out
Into the rain;
Soon we are driving
All about the city
In the rain ...
The spirit of the season
Undampened in our hearts;
Down long streets where trees
Are lighted

Brightly lighted everywhere.
Looking at the Christmas windows
Filled with gifts of every kind
Representing many cities
Many foreign lands;
A fairy-land for children
With Santa and his reindeer;
Wise Men on their camels
Gaze upon the Star;
On and on we're driving
'Nor giving thought to time ...

He has come
He has gone
Leaving something with me.
He has left in my heart the song of the birds
The birds that come in the spring ...
He has left a soothing summer breeze
The golden leaves of autumn
The joy of Christmas
He is coming again ...

IX

Days pass ...
Christmas is coming nearer;
My son John, away at college
Will not be home for Christmas
Already has his plans
And should be spared
All worrying of me.
I am tired ...very tired ...
I am going to Mexico City
And spend my Christmas there
To have a rest and change;
I need to be alone ...

Soon after my arrival
I meet a man
Alone
The same as I...

We spend the day together
Christmas day and many days.
It becomes a lovely friendship

Christmas day I always shall remember
In the floating gardens
Xochimilco ...
Gliding for hours
In a gay little barge
Among tree-covered islands.
Beautiful, dark-skinned girls
In canoes
Selling flowers
Gay, colorful orchestras.
In native costumes
Playing plaintive music ...
All
Like a bit of another world ...
I am thinking of two people
Who are far away today;
They too, have thought of me;
From Nanjo San, a cablegram
"With love and joy to you at Christmas"
And a message from my son —
"With love and wishes for your happiness
Always thinking of you. John ."

X

On New Year's day
I know I must return;
Something tells me I must hasten
Just a pain beneath my shoulder
Urging me to hurry home ...
When I reach my destination
A friend is there to meet me;
Soon my doctor is arriving
He has vanquished ills before
He checks the pain
And calls the hospital;

Soon I am there.
I have pneumonia ...
Days go by
Time does not matter
Just lying there.
Nurses
Nurses everywhere
Filling the room with steam
Giving me oxygen ...
Sulpha drugs
There is just a spark of spirit ...
No — my son is not to know

Finally a consultation
Specialists come and go ...
Drain the lungs?
It's all the same to me ...
I hear the doctor tell the nurse
I'll be here
Months
The spark of life keeps floating

One day this spark of spirit
Goes to sleep
And dreams
Of Japan ...
Walking
Beside the seashore
By a stream
In the mountains
Through the orange groves
Hand in hand with Nanjo San
Every time the spirit falters —

- ...
Wants to rest awhile —
Nanjo San says "Just a little farther
Just a little farther
And we'll be there ."

Endless ages I am walking
Walking in a garden

Beside a waterfall
Over bridges
Curving bridges
On and on
His hand leading me
Urging me to carry on
I am so very tired ...

Morning comes
I am waking
From a dream;
Everything is strange about me
And I wonder where I am ...
Dazed, my thoughts are moving slowly
Groping, wondering
When I see beside me, smiling —
God —
In the face of a friend.

My nurse is smiling.
I cannot move my hand.

AL
She stands there
Silently inspiring.
Then the doctor comes
He, too, is smiling ...
"Well, good-morning ...
Where do you think you've been?"
I am too weak to answer
But he knows I shall be well.

I have passed through the shadow.
I must be needed ...

Where have I had such thoughts before?
It was on a ship
The Kamakura Maru ...
God was speaking to me then ...
He is speaking to me now.

My thoughts begin to function
Begin to have a meaning;

I want to know the date
I want to see my son
He doesn't know I have been ill
And Nanjo San is coming
Will be here very soon.
I must be home to meet him,
Strong and well ...
The end of February;
In another month or two
I'll be able to leave
The doctor tells me ...
I smile at him;
He does not know
That I'll be leaving soon

In March
The doctor cannot understand
What's happening;
"This is a miracle
You are getting well too fast
For one so ill as you were;
This is past all understanding."
I smile at him ...
I know I'm going home.

My son comes ...
So long since I have seen him;
He is wonderful;
I'm glad we told him nothing
He stays with me a week
Then has to hurry back to school ...

XI

I am home ...
The door is open;
Lily, my maid, stands there;
With arms outstretched to greet me
She is standing at the door ...
Soon she has me walking
A little bit each day;

I am growing stronger.
She tells me funny stories
Dramatizes her experiences
With her boy friend
Just to make me laugh.

A letter comes ...
Nanjo San's in San Francisco
Nor does he know I have been ill
And I plan not to tell him,
But a friend
Without my knowing
Sends a letter to the ship.

I cannot drive as yet
So I am taken there when he arrives;
When I walk into his presence
Peace and strength enfold me;
They are shining
From his eyes.

Soon we're doing things together
Things that I have planned
While he was on the way.
We go to see "Fantasia"
Something strangely new
In pictures;
It is fascinating.
Florentine Gardens ...
To Padua Hills ...
The cinema in Pasadena ...
Chinatown for dinner ...
All this
In two short days
Before returning to the ship.

Two days.
That is all.
Now he is gone
And in my heart
A song
Of peace, and strength, and happiness;

He will come again in May ...

XII

The weeks just fly ...
I sit in the sunshine
I walk a bit
Getting stronger day by day;
I listen to the radio.
One program
Has canaries singing;
Hundreds of canaries
Pouring forth their hearts in song.
I listen to the symphony
And to Fred Waring's program
To Firestone and Ford;
They lift my consciousness
And keep it high
I know there's something I must do
Something for humanity ...
"Please, God, tell me what it is
That I'm to do."

It is April.
My garden is beautiful with roses;
Roses everywhere
On the fences, trellises
And pergolas,
Climbing to the housetop
Blooming in the garden
They are lovely.
People walk for blocks to see them
My memorial to Bob.
I cut and cut and cut them
Giving them away
To bring joy and happiness
I know it pleases him
To have me do so ...

XIII

Before I realize,
The month of May is here;
Nanjo San arrives tomorrow.
I am glad the roses
Still are lovely ...

He has phoned;
I am leaving to meet him
Although a little late
We will celebrate
His birthday ...
The same friends
Who came at Christmas
Will join us once again ...

We go to Earl Carroll's
Enjoying every moment ...
On the morrow
Shopping
For his family ...

In the afternoon
A drive
My favorite boulevard
Through verdant hills
Down to the
Palisades.
Stopping at the Chinese gardens;
Walking out along the pier ...

The sun is low
When we reach home;
Our same good friends are there
Chatting with one another
When we arrive
For dinner ...
Once again we are talking
In this warm and friendly room
Only now
I am joining with the others ...

Tonight we see the Icecapades;
Nanjo San never has seen them;
Lovely, graceful girls
And slender men
Gliding, whirling, dancing
In perfect rhythm;
A beautiful picture
In their colorful costumes ...
Now he has left;
Gone once again ...
Why is my heart troubled?
Did he seem worried when he left?
Something he could not tell me?
He never mentioned his return ...
Why?
I wonder.

From Honolulu
Before the week is done —
A letter ...
"I'll see you in July;
What a wonderful time we had
Together ...
I shall always remember
This birthday
My happiest one.
Is there a hidden meaning
'Neath these words?
Portending things I do not
Understand?
Sadness between the lines?
"What is it Nanjo San?"

XIV

May is gone; June comes
And then July.
I am happy.
My son is coming soon;
Summer vacation ...
And Nanjo San is on the way.

Before the month is gone
He'll be here, too

I sit upon my porch one day
My newsboy throws the paper;
I see open wide
And there
In glaring headlines —
ALL JAPANESE ASSETS FROZEN!
What does it mean
A short time later —
How long cannot say
Another startling headline —
SILKS ON TATUTA MARU
CONFISCATED IN
SAN FRANCISCO.

Nanjo San!
Where he is?
His ship is nearing Honolulu
With many passengers and silk
And I have friends aboard.
It fails to dock ...
Somewhere
Out in the Pacific
Is the Asama Maru
Days overdue at Honolulu.

Where is he, God?
My heart is asking.
Have they plenty of water?
Plenty of food, enough of fuel
Aboard the ship?
Ah, yes ...
I know there is
Plenty of everything.
Nanjo San meets any emergency
Who knows better than I?
He is that kind of person ...

Waiting
Waiting for news ...

None is coming ...
*I call the N.Y.K. Line
The Asama Maru
Is one of their great ships
They give no information ...

*Nippon Yusen Kaisha
"No messages are coming through
Perhaps she will pass Honolulu
And reach here any day."

"May I send Nanjo San a radiogram?"
I ask them.
"Yes, you may,
But he cannot answer
And it may not reach him ."

I send it just the same ...
"My thoughts are with you
Looking forward always
Best of luck, dear friend ."

No answer ...
Not a word of news
In papers
On the radio ...
Dear God, where is he?
I wonder
As the days slip by ...

The Tatuta is returning to Japan
Without a cargo ...
Only passengers
Returning home ...
Headlines —
Again without warning —
ASAMA MARU DOCKED
IN HONOLULU!
All passengers have left her
And taken another ship—
An American ship—
Homeward bound.
They will be in San Francisco soon.

I call the N.Y.K. again
For news of the Asama.
They think she is coming through
To San Francisco;
No further word ...
"But when?"
They cannot tell me that ...

Hastily I pack my bags
My son is going with me
I shall be there, then,
If Nanjo San should come
Without our knowing
In advance ...
There may be something
I can do for him;
He has done
So much for me.
When I arrive
The office tells me gravely
"Still no word;
There is one chance in many
He will come at all."

I wait four days
Four long days.
Then —
ASAMA HAS DOCKED IN KOBE!
Turned back at Honolulu.
Safe at home
Japan ...

While in San Francisco
I learn of Nanjo San's promotion
A splendid one ...
How glad I am
But not surprised
For none is more deserving ...
It never comes to me that
Years may pass before I see
This friend again ...

Returning home
I keep in touch with N.Y.K.
Eager still for news.
Soon I have friends among
These people ...
Meeting wives of the officials
We talk about Japan ...

And then, one day
I feel moved to inquire
If they know of some young woman
Who would like to come
To live with me.
Someone cultured and refined
Who would like to be my friend
And my companion.

Within the week they call me
To the office
To meet a lovely girl Shizue
Secretary to the manager;
Poised, sweet, gracious
She greets me like a princess
I love her in that moment.
I have never changed my mind ...

On Sunday with her parents,
Wealthy Japanese,
She comes to see me ...
They must be sure that I am all
I seem to be.
A Japanese custom
And I think a good one;
She stays.
Nor do I realize
What she will later mean to me

Summer passes ...
My son returns to college ...
Seemed such a short time home ...

More than a year, now
Since I was in Japan ...

I am so fond of Shizue
Charming, lovely
In my home
As though she always lived here ...
Her friends drop by to see her
Her many friends
Her sister and her brother
I enjoy them all.

It is the first day of November;
The Tatuta Maru is coming
To take repatriates home;
Perhaps I'll hear from Nanjo San
Perhaps he'll send a message
Through some friend
As I propose to do to him ...
I shop and buy so many things
For him
And for his family
Things they cannot buy
What joy it gives me ...
We have so much in America
They so little, in Japan.

His message is a kimono and obi
Brought by a friend returning home
To America ...
The colors that I love
Pure white and royal purple;
That is all
No word ...
He knows I understand ...

A letter comes
Just one month later
On the sixth day of December
Nineteen hundred forty-one;
An airmail from Manila.
I recognize the writing.
My heart begins to sing
He tells me he is there

For evacuees to Japan.
He speaks of the kimono
His lovely gift to me;
Speaks of it with reverence
As the thread by which we shall
Hopefully be bound
Until we meet again ...

We must all be brave, he tells me
Through troublesome days ahead ...
"We are
Poised on the brink of disaster
There seems no way to prevent
When all want
And others like me
In America
In Japan
Is love, and
Peace, and happiness
Among all peoples ...
The happy days we spent together
Are days to remember always ...
My family and I send love ...
I shall see you again
Do not worry ...
How soon I cannot tell
But it will be
Well worth the waiting ...
My thoughts lift.
I know that I shall see him ...
I know he will visit America
I know I shall visit Japan ...

XV

Sunday, December Seventh
Nineteen hundred forty-one.
From Pearl Harbor
Like a horrible nightmare
Comes the dreadful news ...
I cannot believe it ...

War between my country
And Japan!

At two in the afternoon
I have listened to this news ...
I see Shizue —
She had gone to her home
For the weekend —
Rushing up the pathway.
She throws her arms around me
We stand there silently
In close embrace
And then she softly speaks to me
Her voice so full of tears —
" could hardly wait to get here
When heard the terrible news;
I knew you needed me

PART II

Nineteen Hundred Forty-Two—Forty-Three

I

The days that followed
I shall not dwell upon.
Days we all remember ...
Days we never can forget
Shizue and I sitting often
In our study, all alone,
Discuss the tragic time ahead ...
We speculate and wonder
What will happen to the Issei —
Parents of the Nisei —
Born in Japan;
But never does it come to us
That Nisei, too, may be restricted.

These loyal, young Americans,
Their hearts
Torn for their parents
But loyal to this country;
They feel that isolation
May be best
For their parents ' safety
And for their country's feelings, too.
For themselves?
They are not worried.
They'll get along, somehow
Without their parents ' guidance.
They are Americans,
After all ...
Before all, too

They talk of things
That they will do
Sacrifices they will make.

Anything for their country
Their
United States.
And so we talk and talk
Until the wee small hours.
Their hearts are full ...

My son comes home for Christmas
He joins in our discussions
And feels the same as we ...
But his time is short
The holiday soon is over
He journeys back to school
His plans uncertain
Shall he enlist or wait?
He decides to wait
A while ...

Then comes January
Nineteen hundred forty-two;
Rumors begin to fly
Nisei rights, too, may be
Curtailed.

What have they done?
Are they not Americans?
They cannot understand ...
They know no other country
These loyal, true Americans
Citizens here-as are
My son and I.
And you, and yours ...

No matter what the race
The creed
The color
They were born here
Sons and daughters
Of this country
This free country.
America, their native land ...
Must loyalty

Be doubted?

And so we talk, together

They are taken over

By the army ...

Everything that they possess

They are forced to sell

At sacrifice

Or leave behind

With friends

Or store as best they can —

The later prey

For vandals

Who are free ...

And then upon short notice

These loyal Nisei leave

For hastily constructed camps

In California and Wyoming

In Utah, Arizona

In Colorado and in Arkansas.

Places that are desolate

And bare

And dreary

Where none has lived before;

They go

With only what they carry

In their hands

And on their backs

America, my precious country,

Must we condone

Injustice

In the sacred name of duty?

Must we sacrifice

Principles of democracy

And live a contradiction

Of the liberty

For which our boys

Are sent to war

To die?

But it is done
In the name of safety
They are sent from their homes
And confined ...
Without trial, convicted.
Their crime?
They are Americans
Whose parents were
Born in Japan.

Shizue, with a hundred others
Among the first to volunteer.
To go to Manzanar;
Buildings
Only half constructed;
Roofs not in place
The water muddy
The weather cold and windy;
And little heat or sanitation ...
Quietly, even eagerly
These young Americans go
To prepare the way
For others soon to follow.
This girl
Whose life has always
Been so carefully protected
Leads the way
To Manzanar

Here in my desk.
And heart —
I have a letter
The first to come
After she left me

“March Thirtieth, Nineteen Hundred Forty-Two.

Dearest — Here I am perched in my quaint, hard, lopsided bed, its mattress made of straw. I've had another sponge bath in water a bit muddy. I've had a day's work. With typhoid inoculations and small pox vaccinations of more than nine hundred, we are swamped with work. I have been working every night. Today, I took my shots. My arm is very sore. So many come with

headaches and fever — reactions from the shots.

It has been such lovely weather these past three days. Since it was necessary to leave you I thank God for sending me to these beautiful mountains, so white and pure. They remind me of your hair and your kindness. ... When I went out of doors tonight to throw away the water, the moon was shining and the glorious snowcapped mountains seemed to glisten. ...

So many buildings going up. To be a part of this and to see my “vacation home,” as Naruse San calls it, grow each day, is a privilege for which I am grateful as well as for the experience I am having.

The showers are in now, but since I worked late, I had to take a sponge bath.

My sister wrote to tell me of your kindnesses to them and to others. Sometimes it makes me cry. ...

My mind has become quite serious with all our problems and the uncertainty of our future. To escape such fears I try to lose myself in work. This helps.

Seeing our young people laughing and having fun makes me wish that I, too, could be like that. But I know the day will come when we all can laugh again.

Is Dicky bird singing as happily as usual? I often wondered when I listened to him sing, whether he, too, had sensed the change in all the world. But do not worry. One of these days I shall come home and sing with Dicky. ...

I miss you very much. ...

*All my love,
Shizue.”*

II

It is springtime
Nineteen forty-two;
Again my roses are in bloom
Again I am alone ...
My friends are thoughtful, always;
They never mention war to me
They are trying to understand ...

My boy and their boys
Leaving together;
In uniform

They go together
To serve
Their beloved country
As best they can.
Our hearts are torn.
But all mothers' thoughts
Are not
The same as mine ...

I love all peoples ...
To me
Brothers are fighting,
Hatred burning on their faces
Gleaming in their eyes;
Fighting
Without mercy
Giving up only when one dies.
Dear God, does this have to be?

Many do not understand
My feelings
So I don't
Discuss them
Even with the man
Who tries to understand;
The kindest friend
Who does his best.
He takes me everywhere, to fill
My time and thoughts;
It doesn't seem to help ...
Why can't I find release?

More and more I am withdrawing
As the days go by
Closer to my home.
It seems more like a haven
Every day.

Here I feel
The presence
Of those I love
About me ...

Here, inside my home
I hear no bitter words of hatred
And resentment
Toward Japan-Nanjo San's country —
By my countrymen
Who have only hatred
For this enemy ...
I know ...I understand
And do not blame them ...

But they do not know
What I know;
It is not the real
Japan of which they now are thinking ...
The Japan of Nanjo San
Is being crushed and twisted
Driven by a cruel, determined band
The military clique whose hearts
Are filled with bitterness
And hatred
Toward the world ...

Japanese like Nanjo San
Love beauty;
A nation so artistic
You see it everywhere
In everything they do.
Their gardens, tiny gardens,
Their streams and waterfalls,
Their bridges, lanterns, trees, and birds,
Their graceful, rhythmic dancing,
Their colorful native dress
And- —
"Loving beauty is akin to God ."

But can I say this to my friends?
"Tis better not
Not now.
They would not understand
Nor would they care ...
My heart is aching;

What can I do to show
My love and understanding?
I will keep in touch
With the Nisei
They are Americans
And they need all their friends;
There isn't much that I can do ...
I can write to them
I can shop for them;
In every way
I shall do what I can
To show my love for them.

Not ever must they think
They are forgotten
They must never
For a moment
Forget
That there are those who understand
Their loyalty
Their hopes
Their heartache
Their disillusionment

And so I write and write
Helping them to keep in touch with home ...
I write to them
And to my son
Knowing the day will come
When they will all
Be home again ...

My circle grows
Until my spare time
All is taken
Writing letters ...
They tell me their experiences.
I tell them what I think
They wish to hear ...
Once every month
I write to Nanjo San
And file it with the others

I am keeping ' til he comes.

Every night

As I retire

I have a talk with God ...

Some would call it praying,

Some would call it treating ...

To me it's just a friendly chat

With One who understands.

He understands so well

My every thought

My every feeling ...

He tells me that

He is protecting John, my son,

Somewhere out on the ocean

Enroute to foreign shores ...

He keeps him safe from every harm

Guides his every footstep

Wherever he may be.

Keeps love in his heart

Clean thoughts in his mind;

And some day he'll return to me.

He tells me Nanjo San

Is safe and well ...

Every night, every morning

Often through the day He tells me.

Never do I doubt His word ...

Nanjo San's life unfolds before me

As I sit here in the evening;

A life so full, so rich

And beautiful ...

I see him building

Character and strength

In others

Lifting thoughts

Around him

Guarding, guiding, those around him

Helping them to climb their hill;

Peering on into the future

When his country shall be free

When as friends, he'll bring together
In peace, instead of combat —
In love instead of hatred —
His country
And my country

"Why is the world
Filled with fighting, God?
When there is
So much for everyone
Of life and love
And things material?
Why can we not live
Together happily?
Life here is only a moment
Snatched from eternity
Why must we hate
And envy
And fill our hearts with greed?"

III

Months pass
Each day is much the same.
Christmas approaches
It is very near;
I am happy
Buying Christmas gifts
Stretching time and money
To reach as many
As I can

One day a letter from my son;
He is safe
Now overseas ...
I take it to the garden.
I like to read my letters there
I wonder what he has to tell me
He is full of interesting surprises
This son of mine.
I wonder what it is this time ...

" Oh, my dear!
So you are married
To a lovely girl
Married just before you sailed!"
I wonder why
He has not mentioned her
Before ...
He says he is
The happiest person
In the world.
I do believe him
And always want him so
I know he must have chosen wisely
He seldom judges wrong.
He will make her happy, too
She soon is coming here
To spend the Christmastime
With me;
She will be here
In mid-December
Bless them both ...
I always have wanted
A daughter ...

I hurry with my shopping
So time will be our own
While she is here ...
She comes ...
An important day to her
An important day to me
I know her instantly
Among the other passengers;
She is lovely
The days go quickly
We are happy together
She is all that I had hoped
This wife of my son ...

December seventh
Nineteen hundred forty-two
With it comes a letter
From an unknown friend
One who returned last August
On the Gripsholm.
Coming from Japan
To Lorenzo Marques, East Africa
Aboard the Asama Maru
With Nanjo San ...
What joy this letter brings me
As I read it in my garden
Nanjo San has sent me
A message, filled
With love and understanding
Saying he is not in sympathy
With this terrible war;
Urging me to keep my courage
To know that he is thinking
Of me
And that he did receive
My message ...
So again my heart is lifted
For I have heard
From this loyal friend ...

The New Year is here ...
My daughter now
Has gone ...
Again the time hangs heavy
When every moment
Should be full ...

I become a Red Cross "Gray Lady"
Serving in a hospital
Helping do those things
For which the busy nurses
Have no time ...

Summer of
Nineteen hundred forty-three;
My faith remains the same.
I continue writing letters
My circle ever widening
As the Nisei bravely leave the camps
Seeking work
Wherever they can find it
To help their country ...

Now I hear of their experiences
In colleges and cities
In many states;
They are treated kindly
Nearly always ...
Many, too, are going to war
With their brothers —
My son
And other Americans —
Giving all they have to give
To their country ...
They give their lives without
Thought of resentment
In their hearts
Toward their America

May share with you this letter
From my son?

"Dearest Mother — Your letters are always an inspiration. I let the other boys read some of them — boys who have no mothers, mostly. I tell them to write to you. You will be their mother, too. ...

Everything is fine with me. Do not worry. It won't be long before I am home again, I'm sure.

Today I want to tell you of the Japanese-Americans who recently have joined our outfit. I know how much they mean to you.

Mother, I cannot conceive of men more fearless. Their tenacity and cheerfulness in face of gravest danger is an inspiration to us all. Even when given the most difficult assignment — even when in the very front lines — they seem to have no fear of death. Nothing seems to stop them. They accomplish

their mission even though many never return. Sometimes it's no more than a handful. They have won their place among us. They sure are tops. The officers say they are among the finest soldiers in their command.

I know you read about them, Mother. I only hope all mothers do, and understand and appreciate what they are doing for their country. We are brothers here together, fighting in a common cause.

When we return there must be no hatred, no resentment or prejudice toward these Americans. Their parents who were born in Japan have given their sons into service the same as American parents, to help make this a better world. I'm glad you understand and love them, and I'm sure you are doing all you can.

The world will not seem so big nor lands so remote when the war is over. We can fly in a few hours to places it now takes weeks to reach by ship. I hope when that time comes, you can go where you want to go, always. I have come to realize what a citizen of the whole wide world you are, in all your thoughts and actions. ...

I am glad you are like that. We must contact all peoples, mustn't we, to understand? And when we do, we find them nearly all the same; their loves, their hates, their thoughts of God, no matter what the race. And isn't hatred due to lack of understanding?

The world must be a better place with greater love each person for the other. Otherwise this fighting is in vain. Good must come from it. Exploitation must end. Peace must bring freedom and happiness to all, the whole world over. That is what many of our boys have died for. That is what the rest of us still fight for. I know your prayers so well, Mother. They are my prayers, too.

Bless you always,

Your son,

John."

And bless you, my son,
For thought like these ...

The days go by.
Every night I talk with God
As I began to do
Oh, so long ago
Aboard the Asama Maru ...

" know you had no part, God,
In this war.
It is no part of Your Plan
But I know You can turn
Hate to Love
You can turn bad to good
You are the Power that made
The world
You are the World
We are the world
We are One with You
There is nothing too great
For You to do ...
This war must end
It is ending ...

i see peace again
Descending on Your World
You have given us freedom of thought
Freedom of choice
We have abused the privilege, God,
Forgive us; we know not what we do ...
Turn all thoughts away from hatred
Thoughts of hate brought on this war
Thoughts of hate
And greed
And envy . "

PART III

Nineteen Hundred Forty-Four—Forty-Five

I

Nineteen forty-four passes;
The war still is continuing
With increasing fury ...
My life seems monotonous
My work limited ...
I feel conflict
Deep within me
Like two people arguing.

"You have hidden yourself away
Too long
You have not wished
To hear what people say ...
Is that living the life
You are here to live?
Is that serving
As best you can
As John has asked?"

The other voice, faintly persistent,
"But shrink at thought of contact;
It is so much pleasanter
Alone, here
With my thoughts."
Then soft and low
From deep within me ...
"God's Love is everywhere
Unmindful of the things
You see and hear;
Your daily life
This love must reflect
That others may see and feel
The peace and confidence

That you have known
In the calm solitude
Of home ...
Nothing you hear can hurt you
Nothing —
For God is everywhere ...

We do not need to listen
To words we wish not to hear
Unless thereby
We lighten another's load
Or ease some pain
Or anguish ...
To God there is no great nor small
He sends His love alike to all.
Our mission is to understand
To give to others what we can
Oft a chance word
Said to a friend
May reach other ears
We did not
Intend to reach
And like a ripple in a pool
Go on and on
Perhaps to change some life completely;
Even many lives
Of which
We never know ...

You are strong, now ...
You must contact others ...
The way will unfold before you
Disclosing what you should do ."

John is in Germany
Serving his country well ...
Nanjo San, too
Is safe —
God's voice within me
Tells me so —
Carrying on the work
That I have seen him doing

In meditative moments ...
Shizue in the hospital
Of a great university
Doing her part ...
The Nisei, out of camps
Are taking their places
In the world again ...
The war is nearly done
It cannot last much longer.

And so
I meditate
Here, in my garden ...
A touch of spring
Is in the air
So warm and sunny
A lazy day.

I feel God's Presence
Everywhere.
In the buds peeping forth
From trees and shrubs
In colorful flowers
Already blooming
In the song of birds —
The meadowlarks
The mockingbirds —
In the lovely perfume
Of my roses ...
I'll go to church, tonight
I'll contact people there ...
I'll blend my thoughts with theirs
Each thought a prayer —
A prayer for Peace and Happiness
Throughout the world ...

II

Thus in deep reverie
I go alone ...
I cross the foyer

To the stairway
Walking in a dream
I am late ...
One seat is left
And I sit down
Hardly conscious of the people
All about me ...

Soon a voice is speaking
A voice that sounds
To me
Like One I know
One I oft have heard before ...
The very words are His
And as I listen
There springs within my heart
A great, exultant joy
I know within this moment
Everywhere
Throughout the world
The Great Spirit, my God
Your God
The God of every nation
Is speaking words of comfort
Urging us to courage
To continue without fear
To help where 'er we can.

I leave the place on wings
So glad that I attended;
"Thank you," I tell the speaker
He bids me come again.
And so I go
As often as I can
It lifts my spirit
It fills my heart
With peace and comfort
The speaker seems inspired
Everybody loves him ...

Then one night —
A night I always shall remember —

This bond of love and friendship
Becomes more real to me ...
I learn of the cross he is bearing
A cross like the one I have borne ...
He isn't speaking this evening
He was ready to speak
When summoned to his home ...

The one he loves
Is about to leave him
As I was left —
Alone.

The foyer seems lonely
And silent
And dark
Without him ...
For a moment I feel stricken
I must do something.
He does so much for others ...
It comes upon me suddenly
That this man, too, is human
Human as am human
"Go home ...
Go home and pray ...
Pray for them both."
And I do
The whole night through.
He never falters in the days
That follow;
He never goes away;
Continues to give guidance
To those who come to him
Day after day
We become wonderful friends
Happy days together
A common bond of understanding ...
Months pass ...
His vacation is here
I am glad
He is having rest and change ...

III

And then, while he is gone
The long awaited news
For which a sick
And weary world
Has hungered ...
Fighting is ended!
The war with Japan is over!
My heart near bursts with joy
Our boys in every land
Will soon be home again
With those they love ...
"Peace is here!
I thank You, God".

I'll see my son
My precious son ...
If only for a moment
I could forget
Those not coming home ...
To their mothers, their wives
And sweethearts
I am sending all my thoughts
Of love ...

I want to talk
To my beloved friend
To share my joy with him
I feel sure that
He will call
Wherever he may be
He knows how much this day
Has meant to me ...

The day is ended ...
Many friends have called me
But he, from whom
I wanted most to hear
Is silent ...

Days pass ...
No word ...
I am going East.
On my birthday I take a plane
To Michigan;
A fortnight I remain ...
When I return
I am filled with
Deep concern ...
So many things I do not seem
To understand ...

Have I lost this cherished friend?
No...
One never loses friends ...
Friendship is eternal
Friendship never ends
He is still my friend . ' ...

Autumn ...
Uneasiness lingers
For still
I do not hear ...
"Bless him, God,
In all that he is doing
Wherever he may be.

IV

The camps are closing.
Nisei and their parents
Returning home
Returning by the thousands
Without a place to go
In hastily constructed hostels
They are housed
About the city
I help a few get work
I store some things for others
I contact sympathetic friends
To see what can be done ...

There seems so little I can do.

My son is home
Released from service
Big and bronzed and strong
So wonderful to have him home
His wife, now with her mother
Soon will join him ...
And a letter from Shizue tells me
She, too, will soon be home

Shizue comes
And then John's wife
So once again
We are together
In perfect understanding.

V

I'm free now
No longer needed
Here at home ...
The time has come
To go again ...

I want to find the key
Unlock the door
Of understanding
Between my beloved friend and me
I have not found it ...
Here in the city
I am too close to him
I need to go away
Far, far away
Where I can look
Upon our friendship
With new perspective
Through eyes
Of understanding ...
The way will then unfold
Before me
And I will see

All that I am meant to see
To bring to me
My happiness.

PART IV

I

South America ...
Land of beauty
And of sunshine —
Of mystery, too
And intrigue —
Beckons invitingly.
I leave within the week
Aboard the Clipper ...
I have said goodby to family
And friends
And now am away
To Mexico City
A song in my heart.
A song
Whispered to me
By a loving friend
A moment before my leaving:
"Cradled in His Everlasting Arms
I rest secure from worldly harms"
All night long I hear it
Above the rhythm of the motor's hum ...
Even as I sleep
And dream ...

I wake refreshed

101°
To an inspiring dawn
Dawn of a bright new day
My spirits risen
To greet the sun ...
All thoughts of conflict
Now have vanished.

God has charge of my affairs
Only good can reach me

Only good can leave me.
This thought is my companion
Through all decisions
That make
Guiding
Comforting
Giving assurance
And perfect understanding
Wherever I may be ...

I pause a short time only
In lovely Mexico City
Then on to Panama
For just a day or two
Before I go to Lima ...

II

Lima
Quaint and charming;
European atmosphere
And climate
I have known before ...
I linger longer here ...

There is news from home
News from my beloved friend ...
My prayer is answered ...
And now
I understand ...
A wonderful thing has happened ...
"Bless him
And bless his new-found union ...

They are over
Our happy days together
But days that were meant to be ...
It is better so
For now I know
You have chosen for me, God,
You have chosen for my happiness

And for his happiness, too ...

His work
The wonderful work he is doing
Grows greater
Each day ...
All that is good
In abundance flows his way;
His mind, his talent
His consciousness and power
Increase with each new moment;
The mighty forces in him
Are beginning their
Greatest creation;
For him I see a future
As brilliant as the sun ...
I see him on a mountain peak
Thinking your thoughts, God."

I know my life is richer
Through each experience.
I am grateful for this moment ...

III

Enroute to Santiago
Beautiful city in Chile
My thoughts are traveling onward.
Flying low o'er the ocean
Its tumbling waves
Break on a shore
So lonely
Desolate coastline ...
No sign of habitation
Anywhere.
A long long day
In the air,
Longest since I left home
We near our journey's end
At last;
The sun is sinking low.

My thoughts are on
The future
Visions of days to come
When again I shall be traveling
Where'er I please
As in the days now gone ...

Gazing leisurely
From my window
Dreaming happy dreams

But now these dreams
Are blending
With reality so wondrous
That I find myself
Enthralled, entranced —
For on the far horizon
Like a mystic castle
Rising high, majestically
Above encircling clouds
A snowcapped peak
In the Andes
Standing there alone
As sentinel
Guarding the people
Of Chile ...
Glistening with jewels
In the setting sun ...
Such solemn grandeur
Such inspiring beauty.
My thoughts
Ascend to heights
Unknown before ...

Mount Autofagasta
Sacred mount of Chile
Magnificent, austere
In all its massive dignity,
Rearing nobly
Above the darker ranges
Lost in shadows
Far below ...

"For this vision
Of transcendent beauty, God,
I am so grateful;
It has been a perfect day."

Lovely Santiago
Its people gracious and kind
A gentle, pleasing place ...

IV

And now we
Take the skies again
Flying across the
Andes, enroute to
Buenos Aires,
Our wings
Almost touching
The highest peaks ...

Grandeur
Beauty
Quietude
Flood my soul
With deepest peace.
The wonders of God
Lie below me
Veiled in purest white ...
Towering peaks
As far as eye can reach ...
That is all I see
The beautiful, glorious
Andes.

I have met such
Wonderful people
Everywhere
As I have paused
One week two weeks —
Here and there ...

And now —

Buenos Aires;
Its friendly hospitality
Warms me with its kindness;
I have been
Very happy here.

Soon I shall be
In Rio ...
I do not know a person there
But God is everywhere
And so my heart is buoyant ...
I have met Him each day
Since I left home ...
On the planes; in hotels;
On mountains and in desert
And in the countryside ...
On streets of cities, too;
Everywhere I go
He travels also ...

Christmas, I'll spend in Rio;
This Christmas will be perfect
For peace is come
Throughout the world ...
What greater joy than this!
I'll soon see those I love, again
Those friends of long ago ...

I have not heard from Nanjo San
Not yet ...
I know I shall
As soon as mails come through ...

109;

PART V

].

Flying high above the clouds
Calm and peaceful like the sea
Clouds so white
Of billowy softness
Beckoning, welcoming, calling me
With a lover's gentle kindness
Arms outstretched to welcome me ...
Floating, gliding, ever onward
Over clouds of jagged snow
Fields of glaciers, fields of icebergs
Cold and bleak they lie below;
Cold and gray, they freeze the spirit
Like a lover's love grown cold ...
Left behind this desolation
Clouds so dense we cannot see
Close around our ship they gather
Closing gently in on me ...

In His loving arms
We're cradled
Fearlessly we glide along
On and on through misty softness
Engines hum their rhythmic song

II

All day long, these clouds beneath us
Now we glimpse the earth below
Through deep caverns we can see it
Beautiful in all its freshness
As the shadows come and go

What is this we are approaching
As we near our journey's end?
Lovely fairy-land beneath us
Waiting for us to descend ...
Land of beauty, land of promise

City of romance and love
With its never-ending skyline
Reaching for the heavens above;
Looking down upon the harbor
Harbor known around the world
For its peace and wondrous beauty
And the Christus standing guard ...
Slowly slowly we're descending
Banking turning dipping gliding
Now a smoothly-perfect landing
true we're on the ground

Gathering our things about us
Following one behind the other
Down the steps we're moving slowly
Looking at those radiant faces
There to meet their friends and loved ones;
Faces lighting all about us
Shining eyes in smiling welcome
Greetings, greetings, happy greetings
And know that God is speaking
In those voices close beside me
Guiding as He always guides me
Taking charge of my affairs
Making straight the way before me
Calming all my doubts and fears.

Soon the airport is behind me
And I'm circling 'round the harbor
On a boulevard whose beauty
Holds me close in speechless wonder
Lined with royal palms and ceibas
Rising high, majestically;
Flowers blooming in profusion
For the whole wide world to see ...

III

Soon I reach my destination
And I enter
I'm alone ...

Evening shadows gather 'round me
As I stand before my window
Looking out across the harbor
Stranger in an unknown land ...

Suddenly I feel God's Presence
In the hush that is about me
Whispering, calling me His own
Tears gush forth,
The tears of gladness
As I find myself repeating
"Thank You, God
At last I'm home ."

Quickly then the thought comes to me
Time and place?
They do not matter
Here or there
Across the sea
High upon a lonely mountain
Lost in city's gayety
I am home ...
I am not lonely ...
Home is heaven, here and now
No one ever can feel lonely
Living consciously in God ...
Peace and joy, security
Fold me close in their embrace
I am one with all God's goodness
One with happiness and love ...
In a pensive mood, inquiring
What will be my first impressions
Of this land I call my home?
Leisurely I seek the terrace
Finding others there before me
Little groups of people gathered here and there.
Smiling, talking, laughing gaily
But no single word of English
Floating out to greet my ear.

Keen with interest, watching faces
Wond'ring what may be their stories

Weaving my ideas in fancy
Weaving patterns endlessly
Meditating, musing, listening
Understanding not one word
Wond'ring, is there English spoken
In this land I've called my home

Softly now a voice beside me
Voice of music, joy and gladness
Greets me with such gentle kindness.

Looking up I see a woman
Lovely, gracious, charming, smiling
Native of this glorious land
Wyo
Speaking English with an accent
Warming me with outstretched hand ...
Once again I feel His goodness
Ah, so close and comforting
I can feel the Christlike Presence
Winging to me in her words
Telling me she loves my country
Loves my people, loves my language;
And I worship in that moment
This ambassadress of kindness.

I extend my hand in greeting
Tell her of my admiration
For her country and her people;
Tell her how I love the beauty
Of her native land ...

IV

Tired from my long day's journey
Soon go to seek my home
Glad to reach my own apartment
Where I never feel alone.
Moving slowly to my window
In the calm, cool, summer evening
I gaze across the quiet bay ...

Stars are shining in the heavens
Moonlight playing on the waters
Fairies dancing on the moonbeams
Music creeping in around me
Gently stealing all around me
Rows of lights across the harbor
Flickering softly in the distance.
I can feel God's Holy Presence
In this perfect harmony ...

V

Once again before my window
In the early light of dawn
My soul feasting on its beauty
Musing, thinking thoughts of God ...
Countless stars are disappearing
Touched by His magic wand ...
I feel His Brooding Presence
And lo, the night is gone ...

Now I stand in silent rapture
Looking out across the bay
When the sun in blaze of glory
Rises full ...
It is day ...
Tinting the mountainous islands
In a soft and roseate mist;
Caressing rippling waters
That the moon and stars
Have kissed ...
I look at the distant inlets
Hidden at night from view
On my right is Sugar Loaf Mountain
With cable car silent and still.
Buildings look dark and deserted
No sign of life anywhere
The city of Rio is sleeping ...

I stand in the silence
For moments ...

Then comes a murmuring hum
The city is waking around me
The city of Rio is waking
To welcome the rising sun

VI

Weeks of happiness in Rio
Land of friendship, land of romance;
Every day an inspiration
Every night by magic charmed ...
Many good friends do I have here
Friends from far and near
From England and Norway
From Germany
From Australia
And from my native land;

120:

Friends from Brazil, too —
Like the beautiful country —
Thoughtful, gracious, kind ...

Days have come
Days have gone
Passing like a gentle dream
Rested now in soul and body
Time has come to say goodbye

Rover, dreamer, vagabond
I love this glorious land;
Love its beauty; love its people
But must be moving onward
Wandering longing seeking
That which I shall some day find

VII

As I leave Brazil behind me
Watching her receding shores
I bow my head in reverence—

Reverence deep profound —
There with arms outstretched, in blessing
Facing northward toward my country
Stands the Christ on Corcovado
Symbol of longstanding friendship ...

VIII

Thirty days upon the ocean
Perfect, beautiful days ...
I love the ocean
It lifts my very soul...
Standing on the bridge
Beside the captain
Or walking on the deck ...
Meeting ships; great naval ships ...
Watching the rugged shoreline ...
Beautiful sunsets ...
Porpoises at play ...
Talking with other passengers
The days just fly
I am new again

PART VI

Nineteen Hundred Forty-Six

I

I am home ...
Home once more
And in my garden ...
It is Springtime
My roses are in bloom.
They never were more beautiful
It seems to me
Than now
As I walk among them ...

I have seen my son
And his wife;
They are happy
In their home together.
Shizue still is with me
But soon
She plans to marry
One who has done splendid service
For his America ...
We are most proud of him

The Nisei are finding their places
Difficult for them
But they are Americans
Who have performed nobly
For their country ...
Bless them all ...

II

I am opening my mail
Christmas mail, and mail
That has come

While was on the seas ...

I am finding many surprises
Here is a letter from a friend
Whose husband is in Japan
Close to General MacArthur
Helping, guiding
With an understanding hand ...
I am glad ...
He knows the Japanese
The true Japanese —
And they are fond of him ...
He lived among them
More than twenty years
Before the war began;
His wife, Delphine,
Tells me she is sending vitamins
And food and clothing
And other things
That are so needed there;
This friend
Whom I met
Aboard the Asama Maru ...
"Bless you, Delphine;
You have shown me something
I, too, now can do."

III

Here is another letter
A commander in the United States Navy
Now in Tokyo;
I met him only once
Long, long ago
When he was a civilian
Employed by N.Y.K ...

It is nice of him
To write a letter ...
I wonder what he has to say ...
I open it to see...

"Oh, dear God
A message ...
The message ...
It has come
The one for which
I have waited
Oh, so long ...
Nanjo San
And others that I love
Are safe and well and happy
In New — not old — Japan ...

My prayer is answered;
Thank You, God."

FINIS

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