



LUCILE NICKERSON COLYER

# *Thy Neighbor*

A CRITICAL READING EDITION

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EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:  
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

LUCILE NICKERSON COLYER

# *Thy Neighbor*

*A CRITICAL READING EDITION*

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

THE TEXT-TECH PAPERS

*Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Grief, friendship, and wartime witness*

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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.

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# ARCHIVAL IMAGES

*The poet and the material history of the 1946 book*

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***The Author***

*Lucile Colyer, author portrait in the 1946 first edition.*

# *...thy neighbor...*

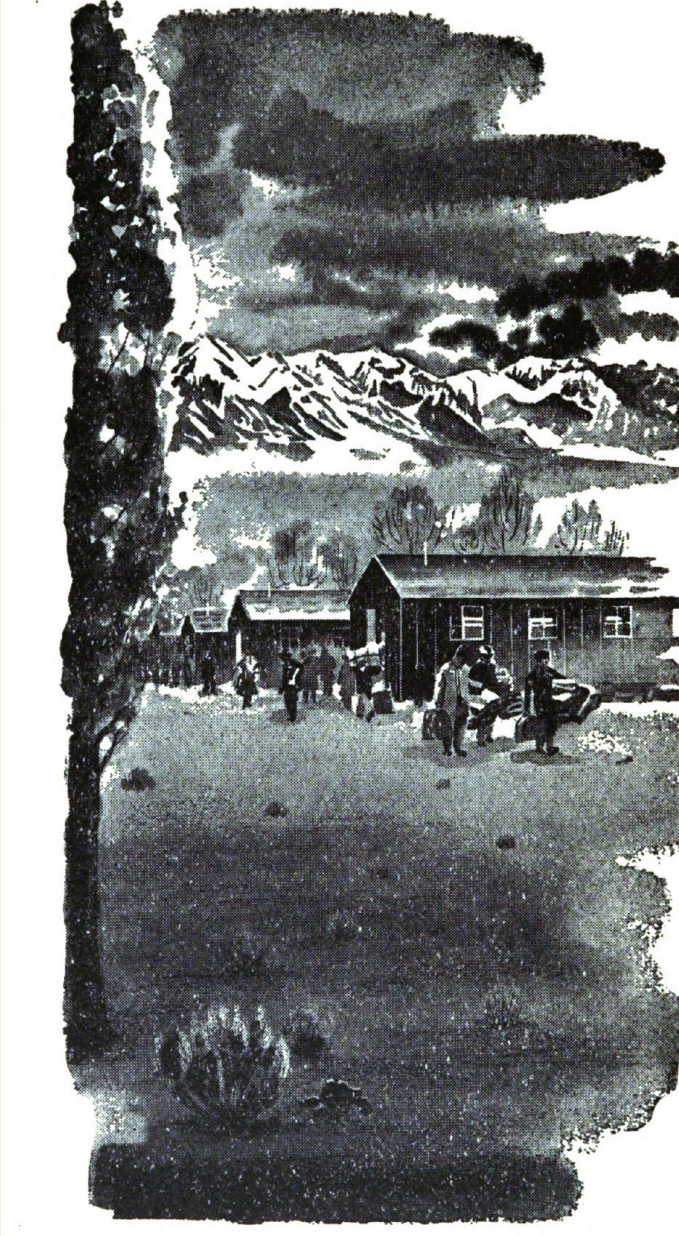
By

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.*

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## EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

*Text, sequence, letters, and reading-text policy*

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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.

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# THY NEIGHBOR

*The complete 1946 poem*

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## 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 goodbye  
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 ...

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## 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;

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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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