

FIRST THEY CAME

First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out--  
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists  
and I did not speak out--  
because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade  
unionists and I did not speak out--  
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me--  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.

-Martin Neimoller

Note: The German Clergyman, Pease Activist, and Author,  
Martin Neimoller (1892-1984) spent eight years in  
concentration camps after organizing clergy to  
resist Nazism.

*Slice-of-life — an anecdotal sketch of life just as it is, without adornment or exaggeration.*

**I**ncident

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,  
I saw a Baltimorean  
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,  
and he was no whit bigger,  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

*Countee Cullen*

**N**azis

*Nazis*, the whispers began,  
*Nazis*, when they gathered  
and poured over each other  
memory of the Old Country  
to wash away the dust  
of the cold Canadian fields.  
*Nazis*, the voices said  
to their backs in the town,  
*Nazis*, to their children  
bewildered at school,  
*Nazis*, until they kept alien  
to their farms and afraid.

Such relief for us all,  
the end of the war,  
the enemy now redefined:  
the stooped Ukrainians  
pausing over their plows.  
*Communists*, we said.  
*Communists*.

*Leona Gom*



# WHAT DO I REMEMBER



## WHAT DO I REMEMBER

During the Second World War, the Japanese navy attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941. The attack spread fear in Canada that Japanese Canadians could be working as spies for the enemy. As a result, about 22,000 Japanese Canadians, many of them born in Canada, were forcibly removed from their homes on the west coast and relocated to the interior of British Columbia and other parts of Canada. The federal government used the War Measures Act to order the removal of all Japanese Canadians living within 160 km of the Pacific coast for reasons of 'national security', but the evacuation was rooted in racism.

### ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere is the emotional feeling inspired by the mood created in a literary work. Description, diction, dialogue, and setting help create the atmosphere. The atmosphere is the world in which the characters live, which should not be confused with tone, which is the writer's attitude toward this world and these characters.

### WHAT DO I REMEMBER OF THE EVACUATION?

I remember my father telling Tim and me

About the mountains and the train

And the excitement of going on a trip

What if I remember of the evacuation?

I remember my mother wrapping

A blanket around me and my

Pretending to fall asleep so she would be proud

Though I was so excited I couldn't sleep

(I hear there were people herded

into the Hastings Park like cattle

Families were made to move in two hours

Abandoning everything, leaving pets

And possessions at gun point

I hear families were broken up

Men were forced to work, I heard

I whispered late at night

That there was suffering and

missed my dogs

That we had friends in the west and

remember Miss Foster and Miss Lighter

Who still live in Vancouver

And who did what they could

And loved the children and who gave me

A puzzle to play with on the train

# OF THE EVACUATION

BY JOY KOGAWA



And I remember the mountains and I was  
Six years old and I swear I saw a giant  
Culliver of Gulliver's Travels scoping the horizon  
And when I told my mother she believed it too  
And I remember how careful my parents were  
Not to bruise us with bitterness  
And I remember the puzzle of Lorraine Lite  
Who said "Don't insult me" when I  
Proudly wrote my name in Japanese  
And Tim flew the Union Jack  
When the war was over but Lorraine  
And her friends spat on us anyway  
And I prayed to the God who loves  
All the children in his sight  
That I might be a poet



## **NOTICE TO ALL JAPANESE PERSONS AND PERSONS OF JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN**

**TAKE NOTICE that under Orders Nos. 21, 22, 23,  
and 24 of the British Columbia Security Commission,  
the following areas were made prohibited areas to  
all persons of the Japanese race: —**

**LULU ISLAND**  
(including Steveston)

**SEA ISLAND**

**EBURNE**

**MARPOLE**

**DISTRICT OF**

**QUEENSBOROUGH**

**CITY OF**

**NEW WESTMINSTER**

**SAPPERTON**

**BURQUITLAM**

**PORT MOODY**

**IOCO**

**PORT COQUITLAM**

**MAILLARDVILLE**

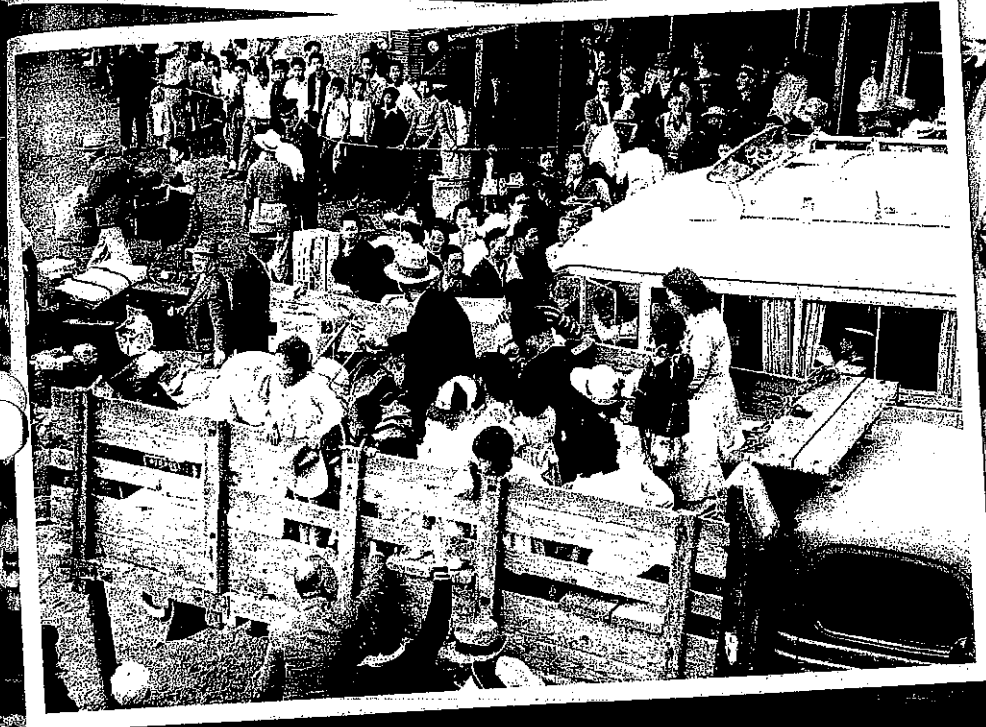
**FRASER MILLS**

**AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that any person of the  
Japanese race found within any of the said prohibited  
areas without a written permit from the British  
Columbia Security Commission or the Royal Canadian  
Mounted Police shall be liable to the penalties  
provided under Order in Council P.C. 1665.**

**AUSTIN C. TAYLOR,**  
Chairman,

**British Columbia Security Commission**





⊕ ZOOM IN

⊖ ZOOM OUT

AMERICAN

# A Child in Prison Camp

A CHILD IN PRISON CAMP

SHIZUYE TAKASHIMA

*During World War Two, the 22,000 men, women, and children of Japanese origin living on Canada's West Coast were stripped of all their civil rights. Many of them—whether Canadian-born, naturalized citizen, or new immigrant—were uprooted from their homes and forced to live in internment camps. Shizuye Takashima, a young girl in one such camp, describes an incident during her first days of school in the New Denver prison camp.*

I stare at the boy sitting beside me.

Feeling my eyes, he turns, smiles gently.

I feel warmth towards him. I wonder what his name is.

Too shy to ask, I return my gaze to our teacher.

End of October. I feel the cold

of the winter wind. It seeps through the paper-thin

walls of the houses. The class is held in a

house the same as ours, only there is one big

room, not three. Each class or grade has one house.

I hear the wind outside. Our black, pot-fat

stove is in the far corner of the room. I cannot feel the heat. I bend forward and put my hands in my overcoat. I wish I were home. I sigh..

"Will you stand up." Startled, I look up.

Miss Mizuno, our teacher, is staring at me.

I obey. "Now," Miss Mizuno continues, "can you

tell us your name, where you lived before coming

to New Denver?" I stare out the window. I feel like

saying "Marco Polo's daughter and I just came

from China, with camels, bells and all,"

for I had just been reading about it.

I can almost see the brown, funny-looking

camels with the fur-capped Tartars. I start to

smile, forgetting all about Miss Mizuno, her

question, the class room. I look down at the wooden

desk, turn to the boy next to me. Miss Mizuno's

voice reaches me from far away. The other students

snicker. The boy next to me whispers, "Your name?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot!" meaning the question, not my

name. Everybody starts to laugh, the boy

next to me the loudest. Miss Mizuno is angry.

"Go outside until you can behave and

remember your name." Miss Mizuno turns

all red, opens the door. I hurry out,

for I have started to laugh, too, and once I start,

I know I will not stop. The door slams after me.

I can still hear laughter. "Class behave!"

the teacher commands. I sit on the steps outside the school

trying not to laugh. Then I hear the door open

once more. I turn. It is the boy who shares my desk.

The door slams behind him, too. Silence.

He sits beside me on the narrow steps, he smiles, squints his dark eyes. "Teachers are funny people. What were you daydreaming about?"

I tell him, "Marco Polo. Can you imagine if I came down the streets with all my camels and servants, with jewels and bells. It's so lovely. I wish I could travel. It's so dull. These dumb schools. I know how to read now and write. I don't see why I have to learn all the other things." The boy stands up and walks away. I follow. "Do you think you'll travel when you're older?" he asks. "Yes, I promise myself every night before I go to sleep that I will go far, far away, and see all the lovely countries. Don't you want to travel?" The boy stares into my eyes; his reflect the dull fall sun, seem so full of dreams. "Yes. But, you know, my mother is not well."

I stand up, look away, feel sad. I look at the gray, pale sky. The smoke from the schoolhouse chimneys curls up, up, into the wide, empty sky. I feel the cold wind against my face. The boy stands too and stares at the sky.

*Reprinted from A CHILD IN PRISON CAMP ©1971, Shizuye Takashima, published by Tundra Books of Montreal.*

## Golden Pants

ROGER LEMELIN

MY PARENTS WERE NOT FAR FROM child, me. And since I was the my brothers. You might take remark for a great piece of non full significance when I tell you I did not know how to sew. See magnificent baby Lemelin, how start learning immediately. She really mastered the craft.

I became the unhappy guinea results proved to be truly catastrophic jackets—they were all slightly



## ELA B10 – Justice and Fairness Poetry Study

**“First They Came”, “Nazis”, “What Do I Remember Of the Evacuation?”, “Child in a Prison Camp”**

### Before Reading

Discuss the idea of an “enemy”. How do average people decide someone is their enemy? How do national leaders decide their enemies? Is the idea of enemy still as prevalent today as it was 50 years ago, on an international level? Why or why not?

### After Reading

**“First They Came”**

1. What is the message of this poem?
2. Read the information about the author. What does this show us about the importance of the poem?

**“Nazis”**

1. Who is the poem referring to? (there is more than one answer) What can you infer is happening to these people and why?
2. What is the message of this poem?

3. How is the narrator in the poem deciding who is her enemy?

**“What Do I Remember Of the Evacuation?”**

1. Explain what “atmosphere” in poetry is as compared to “tone”.

2. What is the atmosphere in this poem? What is the tone?

3. What is Kogawa’s message in this poem?

4. Do you think the speaker’s parents succeeded in not bruising her and her brother “with bitterness”? Support your answer with lines from the poem.

5. Examine the poster and historical photos and answer: How do the photos help you understand the poem? Choose one photo and write a compelling caption that would be included with the photo in a newspaper at this time.

**"Child in a Prison Camp"**

Read this poem and discuss with a partner:

1. How is the atmosphere and tone similar to or different from "What Do I Remember of the Evacuation?"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. This poem is referred to as "prose poetry". Can you figure out why?

**Final Poetry Assignment:**

Choose one of the voices/characters from one of the poems you have just read and write a fictionalized journal entry in the voice of that character. Try to emulate that character. You may discuss what's actually going on in the poem, or, discuss another period of time/experience that the character has "lived through". For example, how did the narrator feel when "they came for the Jews"? What was he doing that day? Or pick one of the people the narrator is talking about in "Nazis" – how do they feel? Or what happened when the kids went back inside the classroom after being sent outside? What happened when they were released from the Prison Camp? There are MANY choices here – get creative!

**Discussion Page:**

Many of these poems also could be put in the "Degrees of Responsibility" section because they cause us to think about ourselves and what we would do if we were in these situations. This begs the question: **What personal responsibility do we accept for the world around us?**

Think about the following questions and discuss with a partner:

**What would you do?**

- What if you saw someone being beaten?
- What if you saw an accident....someone slipped and fell and is hurt.
- An elderly person is struggling with a heavy load on her way to her house with another half a kilometer to walk. Do you walk on by?
- What would you do if you saw friends vandalizing the school?
- What would you do if you knew your friend was stealing from the local store?
- Would you help someone less fortunate than yourself?

Have you ever been in a situation where you could help out and didn't? How did it make you feel?

What happens when we have a chance to act and we don't?

Within the United Nations, Human Rights is a major issue. According to groups like Amnesty International, violation of human rights is on the increase around the world. What should be the consequences for a country violating human rights? Who in Canada is responsible for upholding human rights legislation?