

TEXT #2: Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki, and Houston, James D. *Farewell to Manzanar*

Part 1:

"They got him two weeks later, when we were staying overnight at Woody's place, on Terminal Island. Five hundred Japanese families lived there then, and FBI deputies had been questioning everyone, ransacking houses for anything that could conceivably be used for signaling planes or ships or that indicated loyalty to the Emperor. Most of the houses had radios with a short-wave band and a high aerial on the roof so that wives could make contact with the fishing boats during these long cruises. To the FBI every radio owner was a potential saboteur. The confiscators were often deputies sworn in hastily during the turbulent days right after Pearl Harbor, and these men seemed to be acting out the general panic, seeing sinister possibilities in the most ordinary household items: flashlights, kitchen knives, cameras, lanterns, toy swords."

"The next morning two FBI men in fedora hats and trench coats—like out of a thirties movie—knocked on Woody's door, and when they left, Papa was between them. He didn't struggle. There was no point to it. He had become a man without a country. The land of his birth was at war with America; yet after thirty-five years here he was still prevented by law from becoming an American citizen. He was suddenly a man with no rights who looked exactly like the enemy."

Part 2:

"The American Friends Service helped us find a small house in Boyle Heights, another minority ghetto, in downtown Los Angeles, now inhabited briefly by a few hundred Terminal Island refugees. Executive Order 9066 had been signed by President Roosevelt, giving the War Department authority to define military areas in the western states and to exclude from them anyone who might threaten the war effort. There was a lot of talk about internment, or moving inland, or something like that in store for all Japanese Americans . . . They had seen how quickly Papa was removed, and they knew now that he would not be back for quite a while."

"Then Papa stepped out, wearing a fedora hat and a wilted white shirt. This was September 1942. He had been gone nine months. He had aged ten years. He looked over sixty, gaunt, wilted as his shirt, underweight, leaning on that cane and favoring his right leg . . . He kept that cane for years and it served him well. I see it now as a sad homemade version of the samurai sword his great-great grandfather carried in the land around Hiroshima, at a time when such warriors weren't much needed anymore, when their swords were both their virtue and their burden. It helps me understand how Papa's life could end at a place like Manzanar. He didn't die there, but things finished for him there, whereas for me, it was like a birthplace. The camp was where our life lines intersected."

"Papa never said more than three or four sentences about his nine months at Fort Lincoln. Few men who spent time there will talk about it more than that. Not because of the physical hardship: he had been through worse times on fishing trips down the coast of Mexico. It was the charge of disloyalty. For a man raised in Japan, there was no greater disgrace. And it was the humiliation. It brought him face to face with his own vulnerability, his own powerlessness. He had no rights, no home, no control over his own life. This kind of emasculation was suffered, in one form or another, by all the men interned at Manzanar."

Part 3:

"If I had been told, the next morning, that I could stay outside the fence as long as I wanted, that I was free to go, it would have sent me sprinting for the compound. Lovely as they were to look at, the Sierras were frightening to think about, an icy barricade. If you took off in the opposite direction and made it past the Inyos, you'd hit Death Valley, while to the south there loomed a range of brown sculpted hills everyone said were full of rattlesnakes. Camp One was about as far as I cared to venture. What's more, Block 28 was "where I lived" now."

"In our family the response to this news [the closing of Manzanar] was hardly joyful. For one thing we had no home to return to. Worse, the very thought of going back to the west coast filled us with dread. What will they think of us, those who sent us here? How will they look at us? Three years of wartime propaganda—racist headlines, atrocity movies, hate slogans, and fright mask posters—had turned the Japanese face into something despicable and grotesque. . . . What's more, our years of isolation at Manzanar had widened the already spacious gap between races, and it is not hard to understand why so many preferred to stay where they were."

Part 4:

"'Gee, I didn't know you could speak English.' She was genuinely amazed. I was stunned . . . This girl's guileless remark came as an illumination, an instant knowledge that brought with it the first buds of true shame."

"From that day on, part of me yearned to be invisible. In a way, nothing would have been nicer than for no one to see me . . . They wouldn't see me, they would see the slant-eyed face, the Oriental. This is what accounts, in part, for the entire evacuation. You cannot deport 110,000 people unless you have stopped seeing individuals. Of course, for such a thing to happen, there has to be a kind of acquiescence on the part of the victims, some submerged belief that this treatment is deserved, or at least allowable. It's an attitude easy for non-whites to acquire in America. I had inherited it. Manzanar had confirmed it."