

# Poetry And Prose: The Removal Of Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans After



During a time of deep racial discrimination and fear, the internment of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island became a dark and heartbreaking chapter in American history. This article explores the poetry and prose that emerged from this traumatic experience, shining a light on the stories of those who were affected.

## **Background: The Bainbridge Island Internment**

In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States government began implementing a policy of mass internment of Japanese Americans living along the West Coast. Bainbridge Island, located in

Washington state, was no exception. Families and individuals of Japanese descent were forcibly removed from their homes, left with no choice but to abandon their belongings and their lives, and were then sent to internment camps.



## **Departures: Poetry and Prose on the Removal of Bainbridge Island's Japanese Americans After Pearl Harbor**

**Harbor** by Michael Koglin (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The internment of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island affected around 276 people, the vast majority of whom were American citizens. This act of forced relocation stripped away the basic rights and freedoms of a community whose only crime was their heritage.

### **The Power of Poetry and Prose**

In the midst of unimaginable sorrow and confusion, some individuals turned to poetry and prose as a means of expression and catharsis. Through their written words, these interned Japanese Americans were able to convey the pain, longing, and resilience they experienced during this turbulent time.

## The Haiku: Capturing Fragments of Life

One form of poetry that emerged during the internment on Bainbridge Island was the haiku. Known for its concise and evocative nature, the haiku became a powerful tool for capturing fragments of life amidst the turmoil of the internment camps.

Emiko, a young girl who was interned on Bainbridge Island, wrote a haiku that encapsulates the loss and longing experienced by many:



***“Cherry blossoms fall  
Memories of home linger  
Hope in petals' grace”***

These seventeen syllables hold a profound weight, conveying the bittersweet beauty of life even in the face of adversity.

## Prose: Narratives of Resilience

Alongside poetry, prose played a significant role in documenting the experiences of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island. Through their memoirs and personal accounts, these individuals provided a first-hand narrative of the daily struggles, acts of kindness, and moments of strength that emerged within the internment camps.

One such memoir is "Silent Voices," written by Hiroshi, a young man who lost everything during the internment. In his book, Hiroshi chronicles his family's journey from their forced eviction to their life within the camp.

Through his words, we witness both the despair and the resilience that radiated from the Japanese American community.

## Legacy and Reflection

The poetry and prose that emerged from the internment of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island serves as a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of the human spirit. Even in the face of injustice, these writers found solace and hope within their pen and paper.

Their words offer a glimpse into the pain and struggles endured by an entire community, while also highlighting the power of self-expression in times of adversity. Through their poetry and prose, we are reminded of the importance of honoring the stories and experiences of those who have been marginalized.

The removal and internment of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island is a dark chapter in American history that must never be forgotten. The poetry and prose that emerged from this experience act as a testament to the strength, resilience, and creativity of those who suffered.

Through their written words, these individuals have left a lasting legacy that serves as a reminder to fight against discrimination and to embrace the power of self-expression in the face of adversity.



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The narrative of poetry and prose begins on the eve of Pearl Harbor. An old Croatian fisherman rows across Eagle Harbor on Bainbridge Island to light the kerosene lamps to guide the ferries in, as he does each night. Christmas lights decorate the cottages scattered around the harbor. The lights of Seattle glow to the east. A star falls “from the wayside of infinity.” The next morning, a Sunday, brings the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The owners of the Bainbridge Island Review, Walt and Milly Woodward, work into the wee hours to publish a special edition. Walt Woodward reminds his neighbors, “I am positive every Japanese family on the Island has an intense loyalty for the United States of America and stands ready to defend it.” Up and down the West Coast, however, hatred is stirring. Little more than two months later, President Franklin Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing the removal of people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast of the United States. On March 30, 1942, 227 Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island, under bayonet guard, are marched aboard the ferry Kehloken bound for Seattle and a train waiting to take them to Manzanar, a barbed-wire camp in the central California desert. Many of their island neighbors turned out to see them off. Not a few of them weep. The author, using historical sources and family recollections, has

crafted a poetic narrative of one of the most conspicuous injustices in American history, and explores how the healing goes on.



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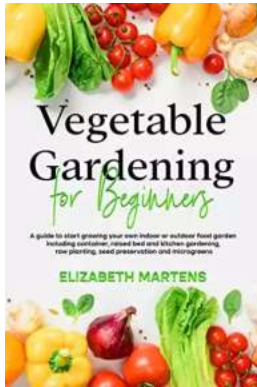
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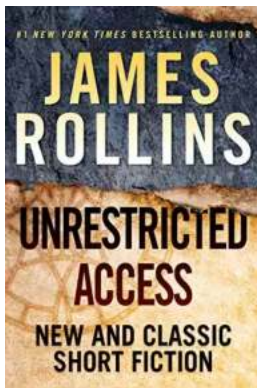
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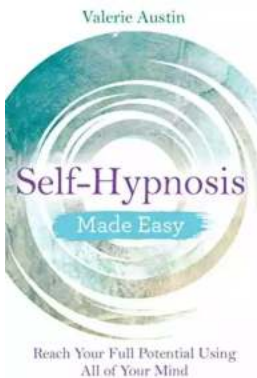
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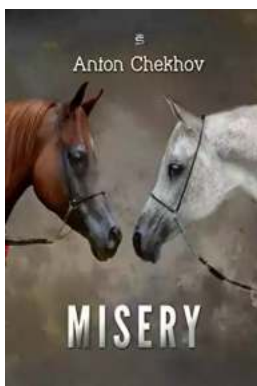
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