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## They Turn Their Eyes Away

Lawrence Matsuda

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## They Turn Their Eyes Away

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Lawrence Matsuda, poet

Minidoka barbed wire  
snags hope like tumbleweed.  
One thousand miles away  
Shoichi Okamoto, at Tule Lake California\*  
twists and falls, a bullet in his head,  
cost of disbelief of a guard.  
The soldier walks free,  
fined a dollar for “unauthorized use  
of government property”.  
Wind blows alkaline dust  
through the tarpaper barrack.  
*Bachan* prays for freedom,  
strikes her singing bowl.  
Minidoka crumbles in her dreams  
when black rain splatters Hiroshima  
and sunlight sparkles silver  
through thin barrack doors.  
Freedom will not be open arms  
and welcome banners.  
Red rose petal showers  
reserved for *real* Americans.  
We are the vanquished foe  
walking thorough the victor’s lair,  
gauntlet of 1000 eyes.  
Anxious to pass unnoticed  
in our yellow skin,

we will turn away from  
*Remember Pearl Harbor* remarks.  
Mushroom clouds inhabit  
the irises of our eyes.