

be blasted off the face of the earth in short order, with Russian bombers from Vladivostok, British and American naval forces and the legions of Chiang Kai-shek all in at the kill. Such awkward questions as Russia's willingness to fight, the real striking power of the United States and Great Britain in Far Eastern waters and the technical ability of the Chinese to pass from a stubborn defensive to an offensive were ignored or brushed aside.

Now it seems clear that we are in for a long, hard struggle in the Pacific. The Japanese are not supermen, nor is Japan the "Land of Gods," as romantic Nipponese nationalists like to call it. But the Japanese are also far from being the

futile cretins of some lightweight American comment. They are a numerous people, bound together by a tight sense of national and racial solidarity. They are not brilliant or versatile intellectually; in many ways they can be stupidly naïve. But they are superior to any other Orientals in organizing ability, in military and naval power, in industrial productive possibilities. They are hardworking, tough, tenacious. Nothing in their historical record, I think, suggests that they would throw up the sponge at the crash of the first bombs over their cities, or that they will surrender until very nearly every available weapon has been shot out of their hands.

AIRPORT AT NIGHT

NOTHING but sound — the dark air curried
by these combs of steel sound . . .

And we walk on the platform to where a tower of flaring light
flashes and strokes up through the elastic dark.

We look out over half-light to the amazing palm of ground, open
for the dim cross-shaped forms leaving and arriving.

One arrives while we watch: we hear a bubble choking and see high light;
the floodlights jut a stream of flat brightness
on the runway. And as easily as a feather, the spotted shadow
curves down and touches, its pour of sound cut off.

A pocket of blackness has opened; the earth reaches up to this form
and welcomes it back to its solid side.

— DANIEL SMYTHE

JEFFERSON'S PROSE POEM: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

By S. K. PADOVER

"Jefferson's Declaration of Independence . . . is not a thesis for philosophers, but a whip for tyrants."—WOODROW WILSON, April 13, 1911.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, probably the most inspiring public statement ever penned on American soil, did not leap into being suddenly, as some imagine, nor did it meet with instant approval. On the contrary, its writing and final acceptance represented enormous labors of composition and persuasion. It was the brain child of one of America's great writers, who chose and chiseled his words with the conscious deliberateness of a Shakespeare. Into it the thirty-three-year-old Thomas Jefferson poured all the fire that was in him, his passionate faith in the goodness of man, his enthusiasm for science and progress, his indestructible love of justice and tolerance, his relentless hatred of cruelty and injustice.

For seventeen days the tall, lean, red-headed Virginian struggled over the Declaration, and when he got through he had a document of

such beauty that it has haunted mankind ever since. Although a state paper, it should really be read *as poetry*. When it is broken into free verse, the result is eloquent.

The background of the Declaration is known to every schoolboy. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson's fellow deputy from Virginia, rose in Congress and made the startling proposal that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States." This meant that the Colonies were ready to take the revolutionary step of separating from England. Congress appointed a committee of five, to draw up a declaration explaining the "causes which impelled us to this mighty resolution." The committee (John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston and Thomas Jefferson) met and agreed that Jefferson, the youngest among them and reputed to wield a facile