

RANDALL JARRELL

A CAMP IN THE PRUSSIAN FOREST¹

I walk beside the prisoners to the road.
Load on puffed load,
Their corpses, stacked like sodden wood,
Lie barred or galled with blood

By the charred warehouse. No one comes today
In the old way
To knock the fillings from their teeth;
The dark, coned, common wreath

Is plaited for their grave—a kind of grief.
The living leaf
Clings to the planted profitable
Pine if it is able;

The boughs sigh, mile on green, calm, breathing mile,
From this dead file
The planners ruled for them. . . . One year
They sent a million here:

Here men were drunk like water, burnt like wood.
The fat of good
And evil, the breast's star of hope
Were rendered into soap.

I paint the star I sawed from yellow pine—
And plant the sign
In soil that does not yet refuse
Its usual Jews

Their first asylum. But the white, dwarfed star—
The dead white star—
Hides nothing, pays for nothing; smoke
Fouls it, a yellow joke,

¹ This poem first appeared in the *Nation*, New York.

The needles of the wreath are chalked with ash,
 A filmy trash
 Litters the black woods with the death
 Of men; and one last breath

Curls from the monstrous chimney . . . I laugh aloud
 Again and again;
 The star laughs from its rotting shroud
 Of flesh. O Star of men!

THE RISING SUN

The card-house over the fault
 Was spilt in a dream; your mother's terraces
 Of hair fell home to hide
 The wooden pillow, the sleek dazzled head
 That bobbed there, a five-coloured cloud.
 Above black pines, the last cloud-girdled peak
 Was brushed on the starlight like a cone of rice.
 The clear flame wavered in the brazier;
 The floor, cold under the quilt,
 Pressed its cramped ground into your dream.
 The great carp, a kite, swam up to you
 Along his line; but you were riding there,
 A sun in air, the pure sky gazing down
 From its six-cornered roof upon the world.
 The kettle gave its hissing laugh, you bowed,
 The characters of moonlight were your name
 Across the bare, old order of the room,
 And you awoke. In your rice-marshed, sea-margined plain
 The flakes, like petals, blew from peak to peak;
 The petals blew from peak to peak, like snow.

Dwarfed and potted cherry, warped
 With the sea-wind, frost with moonlight: child,
 The hunting ghosts throng here for love
 Where water falls, a steady wish;
 The *ronin* stalk by, girded with two swords—
 These kill, these kill, and have not died;

HORIZON

You raise, as you have raised, the wooden sword—
The great two-handed sword; and your fat breast
Glow, trembling, in the patched
And patchwork armour of your school.
On this stage even a wall is silk
And quakes according to a will; heads roll
From the gutted, kneeling sons by rule.

So man is pressed into obedience
Till even the eldest, unaccounting wish
Of his bull's heart, is safe by rote
From his tormentors—who are honourable
In their way, which is your way, child.

The brushed ink of clerks, the abacus
That tells another's fortune, life by life;
The rice-ball garnished with a shred of flesh
Or plum, or blossom, and thus named—
Are these the commerce of the warrior
Who bowed in blue, a child of four,
To the fathers and their father, Strife?

But War delivers all things—men from men
Into the hope of death: Deliverer,
Who whirled the child's grey ashes from the West
Into the shrine beside the rocks: O Way
That led the twitching body to the flame,
Bring to this temple of the blind, burnt dead
The mourning who awaken from your dream
Before a lacquered box, and take the last
Dry puff of smoke, in memory
Of this weak ghost.

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NOEL F. BUSCH

OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

THE occupation of Japan was touched off by the most highly publicized explosion in history, in August of 1945; but while the world has since heard plenty about the atom bomb, it has heard comparatively little about Japan. In an era providing as much to worry about as the present one there are obvious reasons for this omission. Nonetheless, whatever has kept the subject, except for fragmentary or perfunctory mention, off the world's front pages, seems regrettable. For the occupation is not only important but also lively, strange and highly entertaining.

The basic factor in the strangeness of the occupation of Japan lies, naturally, in the character of the Japanese themselves. Since the Japanese character is explicable, in terms of history and environment, it can be argued that it is not intrinsically mysterious at all. Nonetheless, the manifestations of this character, to people who have had neither the obligation nor the opportunity to make such a study, are definitely surprising; and even more astounding than the Japanese impudence in starting the war, and their savagery in conducting it, have been their reactions following it.

To define the Japanese attitude toward defeat requires first of all, at least, a superficial understanding of that tedious cliché, 'face'. In itself there is nothing very mysterious about 'face'; it merely means self-esteem, or, more precisely, a confidence that the character which the world sees in one conforms more or less to the character that one wishes to display. However, where the oriental idea of self-esteem differs from the occidental is in the nature of the justification which the individual demands for this condition which is indispensable to both.

For most Europeans, for example, loss of the war to Japan might have resulted in a considerable loss of personal and individual face. For the Japanese, losing the war entailed no such loss. He was spared any sense of personal guilt on this score by the simple fact that the Emperor proclaimed the surrender. To the Japanese, one of the fundamentals upon which face depends consists exactly in obedience to this dignitary. Hence, the minute the surrender was announced, it became just as important