



The 2020 NEA Big Read

***When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka**

Reading List

Fiction

No-No Boy – John Okada, (1956)

This 1956 novel, by Seattle native John Okada, is considered the first Japanese American novel and an Asian American literary classic. Its title comes from the answers many Japanese American men gave to a government questionnaire administered during World War II: would they serve in the armed forces and would they swear loyalty to the U.S.

Snow Falling on Cedars – David Guterson (1994)

This novel, set on a fictional island in Washington's Puget Sound, has at its heart an interracial love triangle that includes two Japanese Americans sent to an internment camp. The book won a PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and was made into an Oscar-nominated film and a play, which Portland Center Stage produced in 2010.

What the Scarecrow Said – Stewart David Ikeda (1996)

Novel centering on William Fujita, a successful Nisei nursery owner before the war as he tries to rebuild his life in New England after camp having lost both his son and wife in the war. Dispatched to start a small farming operation for a widowed nurse in the small Quaker town of Juggeston in late 1944, Fujita navigates the tricky politics of the area, while tying up loose ends of his former life.

Why She Left Us – Rahna Reiko Rizzuto (1999)

Emi Okada finds herself incarcerated at Santa Anita and Amache with two young children and no husband. The story is told in the first person voices of four different characters—none of whom are Emi—who each know only part of the story.

The Legend of Fire Horse Woman – Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (2003)

Inspired by her parents' early life, interviews she conducted with picture brides, and by ties between Japanese Americans and Native Americans, Houston tells a decidedly woman-centered story of incarceration and rebellion.

***Famous Suicides of the Japanese Empire* – David Mura (2008)**

First novel by acclaimed poet and memoirist David Mura that explores the impact of wartime incarceration—and the silences about it—on a Japanese American family in Chicago after World War II, through the eyes of a forty-something Sansei.

***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* – Jamie Ford (2009)**

A Chinese American widower in Seattle is reminded of his childhood friendship with a Japanese American girl when cartons of internees' belongings are discovered in a long-closed hotel. The book won several awards for its Oregon- and Washington-raised author.

***Bridge of Scarlet Leaves* – Kristina McMorris (2012)**

This novel by a member of Portland's Yoshida family, was inspired by the true story of a white woman, Elaine Black Yoneda, who insisted on following her Japanese American husband and their son into the Manzanar internment camp. About 200 non-Japanese voluntarily entered the camps rather than separate from their spouses, McMorris wrote in an author's note.

***Requiem* – Frances Itani (2013)**

Canada also evicted residents of Japanese descent from its West Coast and interned them during World War II. In this 2013 novel, Canadian writer Frances Itani imagines a man who was interned as a child reopening old wounds from his family's past.

Nonfiction

***Nisei Soldiers Break their Silence, Coming Home to Hood River* – Linda Tamura**
University of Washington Press, 2012.

***Judgement Without Trial, Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* –**
Tetsuden Kashima, University of Washington Press, 2003.

***Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family* –**
Lauren Kessler, Oregon State University Press, 2008.

Personal Justice Denied, Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians – U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982, 1983. The Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and University of Washington Press, 1997.

***Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment* –** National Park Service, Department of the Interior, November 2016.

***Drawing the Line* –** Lawson Fusao Inada, Coffee House Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1997.

***Legends from Camp* –** Lawson Fusao Inada, Coffee House Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1993.

In this Great Land of Freedom: The Japanese Pioneers of Oregon – Lawson Fusao Inada and Mary Worthington, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA, 1993.

Touching the Stones, Tracing One Hundred Years of Japanese History – Oregon Nikkei Endowment, , 1994

Nihonmachi: Portland's Japantown Remembered – George Katagiri, Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, Portland, OR, 2002.

The Gift, The Oregon Nikkei Story Retold – Deena K. Nakata, 1995.

The Train To Crystal City – Jan Jarboe Russell, Scribner, 2015.

Articles

Eiichiro Azuma, “A History of Oregon’s Issei, 1880-1952,” Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 94, No. 4, The Japanese in Oregon (Winter 1993/1994), pp. 315-367.

Amy K. Buck, “Alien land laws: the curtailing of Japanese agricultural pursuits in Oregon,” Portland State University, 1999.

Louis Fiset, “Thinning, Topping, and Loading: Japanese Americans and Beet Sugar in World War II,” The Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol 90, No. 3, (Summer 1999), pp. 123-139.

Daniel P. Johnson, “Anti-Japanese Legislation in Oregon, 1917-1923,” Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 97, No. 2 (Summer 1996) pp. 176-210.

Lillian A. Pereyra, “The Catholic Church and Portland’s Japanese: The Untimely St. Paul Miki School Project,” Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 94, No. 4, The Japanese in Oregon (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 399-434.

Barbara Yasui, “The Nikkei in Oregon, 1834-1940,” Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 76, No. 3 (Sept. 1975), pp. 225-257.

Morgen Young, “Russell Lee in the Northwest: Documenting Japanese American Farm Labor Camps in Oregon and Idaho,” Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 114, No 3 (Fall 2013), pp. 360-364.

Zuigaku Kodachi, Jan Heikkala, Janet Cormack, “Portland Assembly Center: Diary of Saku Tomita,” Oregon Historical Society, Vol 81, No. 2 (Summer 1980), pp. 149-171.

Japanese American Citizens League, A Troubling Legacy, Anti-Asian Sentiment in America, 2005.

Children and Young Adults

A Place Where Sunflowers Grow – Amy Lee-Tai, Felicia Hoshino, Age Level: 6-9

Baseball Saved Us – Ken Mochizuki, Dom Lee, Age Level: 5-8

Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference – Joanne Oppenheim, Age Level: 12-15

Farewell to Manzanar –Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, James D. Houston, Age Level: 12-14

Fred Korematsu Speaks Up – Laura Atkins, Stan Yogi, Age Level: 12-14

Gaijin: American Prisoner of War – Matt Faulkner, Age Level: 12-14

Home of the Brave – Allen Say, Age Level: 9-12

Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans during World War II – Martin W. Sandler
Age Level: 12-14

Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese-American Internment Camps – Mary M. Gruenwald, Age Level: 16-18

So Far from the Sea – Eve Bunting, Age Level: 9-12

Sylvia & Aki – Winifred Conkling, Age Level: 9-12

The Bracelet – Yoshiko Uchida, Age Level: 9-12

Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II – Albert Marrin
Age Level: 12-14

Weedflower – Cynthia Kadohata, Age Level: 12-14