

Air Mail



VIA AIR MAIL

Miss Yuri Domoto
61 - F - 5 - C
Granada Relocation Center
Amache, Colorado

Barrack "I"
School & Student Det.
Camp Savage, Minnesota

Wednesday night

Dear Yuri-

So Kan's typewriter is giving you "bad-time" yet. Well, that's not surprising and it isn't your fault. The only reason why mine behaves is because it's working for the army. Take the case of the portable called "Tessie" that the Readers Digest wrote about last August. She's the typewriter that seemed to have forgotten that there are twenty-six letters in the alphabet, "r" included. The article went thus:

TESSIE GOES ON A STIKE

Tessie is the machine on which I type my Mss., and I will say she has been a faithful helpmate. Despite a few innovations in spelling such as "himslef" and "Buisness," she seldom gave me cause to complain. She knew that any time I got dissatisfied I could buy a new machine.

But now Tessie has let down. When punched, she talks back --with an accent. Owing to a mechanical whim, she won't let me use a highly essential alphabetical symbol. When I push its key down, nothing happens. I just have to go on without it.

It's a doggone impotent consonant, too. I never knew how impotent until Tessie began dopping it. Some Bostonians seem to be able to dispense with it completely. But I miss it.

Of course, it is obvious why Tessie has become hoity-toity. As soon as the Govt. clamped down on mfg. of gadgets like Tessie, she realized she had become indispensable to me in my wok. I had to take what she dished out--and like it. I couldn't get a new machine.

Naturally, this sudden elevation to a position equal to that of suga, ubbe and othe piceless commodities has inflated Tessie's ego to the busting point. Though only a cheap little potable, she has acquired delusions of grandeur worthy of a pipe-organ.

Futhermore, I can find no commercial possibilities in Tessie's accent. The people who edit magazines tell me that dialect stuff went out with M. Dooley; the public doesn't appreciate it nowadays.

So here I am, stuck with Tessie and a 25-lette alphabet for the duration of the war. And the more I write, the worse it looks.

Oh dear!

But even though my portable behaves to a certain degree, it has its faults too. From the grammar constructions it probably didn't finish high school. You'll have to excuse its slangs

cause the air is filled with them. Haven't as yet named it yet. Do you have any suggestion? (It must be a "he" cause it's a "Noiseless".)

Surprised? You said it. Had to reread the paragraph to make sure that it was your sis. I really never got to know her as well as I wanted, but I think she'll never regret her action. As you say, it may not be a bed of rose. But at least it'll be different. That's how I found it when the army took me away from the family. This idea of doing things for yourself has much merit...even though at times results may not be encouraging. At least, the experiences gained is worth the effort. No doubt you'll miss her companionship, Yuri, but you're going to have much fun sharing her new adventure via mail. So here's hoping that everything will turn out O.K.

Went skiing last Wednesday for the first time. And it turned out to be a thrilling experience. At first the fear of falling was worse than the fall itself. But after taking a half dozen hefty spills, it isn't so bad. It's not like taking spills on ice. Can't turn or stop yet but there's no trees or boulders to worry about where we went. Because they haven't any ski tow at the place, the most work comes in climbing up again. And that's not easy. They had expert women in gay costumes there. They'd go zooming down slopes like Sonja Henie. (Slopes that we amateurs don't dare try in spite of G.I. insurance). For some reason or other, I've always imagined that skiing was an expensive sport. But found it to be quite reasonable. If and when I get back to California, I'd like to give Yosemite or Sun Valley if possible a try. (Give the trout a break) Also for some reason or other, I've got a vague mental picture

of you on skiis. (I recall Kair & Kan going on ski trips but not you.) Or maybe I saw you in a picture. Do you remember taking a picture in ski costume? Well, anyhow, the mental picture is a nice one. You were wearing if I recall right a white sweater, a bandanna, a smile, etc. with the white snow as the only background. Maybe it was a dream but it's been bothering me. Can hardly wait for the reply, "So sorry. Never went skiing in my life".

Remember when I first came up to Savage in June I said that non-commissioned soldiers were dime a dozen? Well, since graduation it's been worse. Nothing under two stripes. My barrack alone had at least twenty sergeants before the shipping started. Sure makes me feel good to see the nisei soldiers get the "breaks". (Seems to be the only place where they could get ahead.) In town especially, they're envied by the other soldiers. And their parents too must show their boy's picture to others with pride. (During my trip the parents of soldiers here at Savage requested just two thing, picture and letters)

Speaking of letters, our mail clerk just thought up a new prank. It goes like this. When he calls for the letters of our barrack (It's "I" now) he'd look thru and on those with feminine handwriting, he'd write "S.W.A.K.!" You should see the fun we had. One of fellows looked at his pink-colored envelope with this SWAK and let out a yelp. We all razzed him until he turned red as a beet. Everyone caught on to the joke when the mail orderley put those romantic initials on a letter from a boy. (There was one soldier that had to eat snow for thinking up the idea.)

Yes, Yuri, the letter about "the little man who signals the man who pulls the little whistle" reached alright, as did

the Lamar paper. The article about the Relocation Center was interesting and informative. The gang in here with families there, read it too. And your letter from there too sure proves that you make the most of time available.

It's almost "Taps" so I'll stop here for the time being. Classes doesn't start till late tomorrow morning so I'll continue then. Good Night, Yuri.

Friday night.

Didn't turn out as I had figured. We had an emergency meeting yesterday morning. And because of the meeting, (Or I should say the results thereof) I couldn't continue the letter last night. Had to go to town to attend a send-off party. Forgot just what I wrote so I reread the whole letter. (Confidentially, I felt like tearing it up. That's why I very seldom reread the letter I write. I guess it's like trying to sit thru a movie that you've seen once.) But to continue.

For a change last night, instead of the customary China Meshi we went to a Smorgasbord dinner. It was good because it was so different. Remember the Drake Restaurant in Berkeley where they used to serve Swedish dinner? It was like that. There must have been at least twenty variety.....did I make a pig out of myself and how ! The meat balls and other meats with Swedish names were tasty....so tasty that we were going back and forth like the Frisco ferries for seconds.

My brand? Lucky Strikes now. I like the name. Why did I start? I really don't know exactly. I know it isn't because of the rigorous training that you gave. What started out as "a boy wanting to wear long pants" or "a girl wanting to wear high-heels" feeling, it has now advanced to a stage where I can really enjoy it. Yet, not to a point where I'd resort to

picking up butts (as many do) when out of them. Could go into a long discourse about the whys and wherefores about this habit but won't. Too many have already.

That parlor game you wrote about seems to be interesting. Just the thought of being in such a spot as the victim is embarrassing. The answer "What are we waiting for" must have caused GF5C to rock with laughter. Wonder what would happen if one had said, "What in the hell are you staring at" or "Penny for your thought" or "When do we start" etc. Must try it at some party one of these days. Think I'll burst my side from laughing.

From the way things sound from my brother's letters, he seem to be quite busy. (More so than my CL career) He writes that he's out every night of the week. See his name in the Tule Lake paper quite often so he's doing alright. As for #3 & #4, I'm trying to persuade them to enter some college. Recommended "Swarthmore" near Philadelphia for one thing. I understand that college is very good, and will accept niseis. Being with people here that have degrees from Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, California, etc. makes me wish more than ever that I had finished my college education. If I should get the chance after the war, I'm going to try to continue. You certainly receive mental stimulation when you converse with well-educated persons. They seem to be well-versed in a thousand and one subjects. And frankly, that's why I enjoy reading your letters, Yuri. Without attempting to flatter you, I wish other people could write as well...other including myself. I don't know whether it's due to your background or to a knack, but whatever it is, you have a nice range...from soup to nuts.

Met Chris in the showers tonight...he sure is aching to get into action. I told him about Kan and his marionettes

and he was quite pleased. He's a very likeable fellow, and fellow-students speak well of him. They had at first thought he'd be an "ego" due to his ability as a cartoonist. But they found him to be ~~easy to get along~~ with. One of the students in his class tell me that at times he'd go to the blackboard and draw. But right now, he tells me that "drawing" is just a minor thought with him. All he wants is to get over there, ...with or without the Japanese knowledge.

Still waiting for the day when I'll be able to hear the song "Auld Lang Syne". That's the one the send-off crowd sing as the group board the train at Savage. That feeling that arises is something hard to describe on paper. You know that probably it'll be the last time you'll see them....while at the same time, you kind of look forward to the day when this is all over....and you'll be able to look them up and swap stories. Before the group leaves, they're instructed not to write letters from the train. In fact, they're not permitted to even write home saying that they are going. It seems that the army is not going to take chances of letting the expensive six month course go to waste. But I understand that once at the Port of Embarkation (SF? or Seattle), they can communicate with friends. Perhaps, this'll be a break for you..you won't have to decipher my train wiggles.

It's near eleven (no lights after Taps) so I'll stop now.
G' Nite, Yuri/

Just,

Yoshito

January 15, 1943