

"Ides" of April
nineteen forty

.....

What is there left to say now that you have labeled me a cynic? For I am but a simple revolutionary from the prosaic life of modernity. And remember G.B. Shaw-- he who is not a revolutionary at twenty will become a fossil at forty. Unquote.

Last night our dear sceptical public speaking class, composed entirely of seniors, had a wonderful time at the home of Professor Hildebrand (Dean of our college and world reknown for his work in chemistry and a ski enthusiast) whose son Milton is in our humble midst. In their refreshingly wooded estate we had dinner by an outdoor fireplace, sang sentimental songs, and finally retired indoors for an evening of lecture recitals.

I tell you this because I happened to be the sixth on the list, and I unraveled my two pennies worth on the quest of the reflective modern--the quest for certainty, salavation, and happiness. I need not tell you what I said. What was surprising was that afterwards several girls came to me and told me that they felt exactly as I did about this lost world of ours. It was something as gratifying as it was saddening. But would you ever find any nisei troubling themselves to think of these things? It is little wonder perhaps that occasionally I feel very lonely among the nisei.

Your mention of the abolition of compulsory ROTC hit a very touchy issue in this region--I happen to be a member, one of the more inactive ones to be sure, of the ASUC Peace Committee which has been leading the fight against it. It was our chairman who compiled a magnificent 70-page report which Villard of the Nation

declared by far the most convincing report agin compulsory ROTC. But our dear old Regents, reactionary reprobates floundering in plutocratic depths (don't quote me please), said nix. It just a part of the grand fight now going on between the students and the administration. The former composed of left-wing liberals stand staunchly for their principles of democracy and self-government; the latter with the pressure of narrow-minded legislators and big business interests is trying to clamp down on what they call "radical" ideas. It is interesting, if not exciting.

But in just about a month, I shall pass through the unpearly portals of graduation with a roll of parchment calling me "artius baccalaureus"; but am I through with college? No, I am to linger on for several years to struggle for a master's degree and possibly more. All this, I suppose, for the sake of the grand march of enlightenment and human progress to which I must contribute my little idiosyncratic bit.

I suppose that I should feel very fine, especially in light of the Phi Beta Kappa key which has now been bestowed upon me. My family and my friends were overjoyed about it. It was nice for me, too, but unfortunately someone within the last year killed a great deal of my ego. While I feel good on the left side of my heart, the other half is mocking me, debunking me, et al. Seven fellows in our house (we have 107) received this honor, which is quite a record glorious.

I must tell you also of the interesting trip into the snow country which I made last weekend. One of my friends has a cabin near Donner Pass, 180 miles from here. So we hitch-hiked up there starting 6 a.m. Sat. morning and finally arrived about 4:45 p.m. after securing nine different rides. There is nothing so inspiring as the Sierras in the snow, and it was actually snowing there.

The snow was soft and lumpy and skiing wasn't too good, but there was a certain exhilarating feeling which just can't be expressed in words. I should also tell you perhaps of the last ride we received. We were stuck 19 miles from destination and was on the verge of taking the bus which would be coming in fifteen minutes. Then a couple of deputized reporters from the L.A. Times who had been visiting one of the bars in that region picked us up. They asked us, "Do you know who were sitting in that very same seats two hours ago?" We looked dumbly so they replied, "Well, they're in Folsom prison now." They had been taking a couple of prisoners from Hollywood to Folsom which was nearby and they were taking the long route home via Reno. Going sixty around those slippery mountain curves didn't make us feel too good, but we smiled resignedly. They slowed down, however, for the state cops caught up with us and warned the driver to keep the accelerator off the floorboard--just a warning citation, it was. While the cop was making out the pink slip, one of them would jovially remark, "I hear they give those pink slips in Russia for a one-way admittance." There were other mighty interesting personalities that offered us lifts, but I won't dwell on them at the present.

Very interesting to hear your qualifications; most of them mean absolutely nothing to me. What I would seek in a girl is simply a keen mind appreciative of beauty, sensitive to justice, and wise in the ways of the world. I could stand rotten coffee for that--I don't like coffee anyway. But that is only for the mind that falls in love. . . .and we aren't just simply minds.

I'm glad to hear that your fateful step is in the offing. I can't quite relish the idea of myself becoming a family man--it seems like an awful anchorage to me. Divorce might be an escape, but still. . . . I'm afraid, however, that when the time comes when I feel like settling down, I'll probably find all the choice girls gone.

Your job may not seem glamorous to you, but I'm sure that there are many maidens slaving away in dirty kitchens washing pots and pans cooking over steaming stoves who might regard your repose as something heavenly. I suppose, too, in the very chance for indiscretions there's an aura of something or other that one reads about in the Cosmopolitan and the magazines of the smart set.

You seem to be keeping up with the literature of the times. That's a good way to become a dilettante. I've read some of Gunther's Inside Asia, Lerner's It Is Later Than You Think, Beard's America In Mid-Passage, Du Maurier's Rebecca, and Edman's Philosopher's Holiday. The last I recommend to you as very refreshing reading containing insights which often coincides with my own thoughts. The book that really made an impression upon me was Irwin Edman's Contemporary and His Soul in which is discussed the soul of man in this modern world. It had more possibilities of producing comfort than Dreiser's Moods or Dawn. Edman quotes the great Spanish thinker Unamuno who very well expresses my predicament: "The modern heart longs for what the modern mind no longer believes."

I note the passing allusion to platonic friendships. At one time I thought that was a wonderful thing, but only for a while. I really don't believe anything is platonic, unless everything is. The battle between the flesh and spirit as of old still lingers in today's contest between reason and emotion. And man certainly does not live by reason alone.

Well, the pressure of midterms is still on--my last one tomorrow and I'm in no mood to study, especially with a meeting which I must attend. Last night I couldn't sleep until 3 so you can imagine how I feel. The midterm is concerned with the techniques of fiction--Tolstoy's War and Peace, Anna Karenina--Flaubert's Madame Bovary--Balzac's tales--none of which I have read so woe is me.

Tell me what you think of this perpetual emotion called love. Or are you prejudiced?

Sincerely
JG