

April 16, 1942

Dear Tama,

Naturally I thought of you first on my letters-I-must-write list. So, after the important ones, I decided to give you the dope--unadulterated.

First of all, after that fine send-off climaxed, of course, by True Confessions (you rat) we made the train in the nick of time. There was some mix-up at the gate about our Pullmans, and almost as soon as we got on, the thing started to move. We went to bed right away, I with my high-class literature and opsushi, and the boys with their dreams. Nothing happened, however, aside from a few abused muscles. We were met at Spokane by a Mr. Kitamoto who treated us all to a hurried breakfast. We met his very charming wife, who invited us to come and visit them whenever we could (no curfew here or at S. either).

On the train from Spokane to Moscow (pronounced Mos-koj things began to happen. There was a red-faced, slouchy-looking fellow sitting a few seats behind us, who kept walking up the aisle ostensibly for a drink of water, but really to rile us. Once he leered and said "Remember Pearl Harbor?" in a particularly nasty tone. But that's not the important point. I was talking about a girl I met in O'Brien's office who had just come from Moscow as a graduate assistant in soc. She typed my letter of introduction for me and wished me good luck, etc. When I mentioned her name, Norma Steele, ~~the~~ one of the g two girls sitting across the aisle from us, sat up and yelled, "That's my sister." We were all very much pleased, of course, at the size of this good old world, and before the trip was over, we got to be very good friends. Well, in due time, she said, "I want to write a note ~~xxxx~~ to you because I can't say it". It turned out that the aforementioned inebriate was practically falling out of his seat staring at her, and was waving a fistful of paper money. She, Margaret Steele, was frightened, and she asked Ben, in the note, what she should do. You know Ben. He said he would protect her, and that she should chalk it up to experience, and so forth.

Margaret Steele lives in Lewiston, about 30 miles from here. She invited us to her house, so that was one nice thing that happened to us.

All three boys are living on adjacent farms, Chihiro and Ben together and Jim next door. Paul Hatt says that Ben



made himself at home immediately, started calling his employer by his first name (Call me Ben, Karl), and in general seems to be pretty much at home. In no time at all, they will be dirt farmers of the dirtiest sort. They call Chihiro "Koochi". We haven't seen the boys since the first day here.

Being out on the farms, though, they really missed some excitement. We three girls have been stirring up and ~~mix~~ stirred up ever since we arrived. In the first place, we spent the last two nights here at Paul's house, because Marion's prospective benefactor hadn't been contacted yet and Maxine hasn't found a place. She did go to interview a Mrs. Wilson who immediately antagonized her by demanding that she not smoke, which Maxianne doesn't like a stove pipe, and also that she be examined for venereal disease. So that was that.

The trouble started when Marion's employer was finally informed and they came to get her. As soon as she got there, the landlady of the apartment house where the Shealy's live came ~~in~~ storming in and demanded that they get the damn Jap out of there. She had a son overseas in the army, she cried, and now they were bringing the enemy to her doorstep. Prof. Shealy got all hot and bothered, of course, and told her to go to H. They decided to move out as soon as they could find a house, and in the meantime, Marion came back to the Hatt's. Tonight and tomorrow night, poor Marion is staying with the Episcopal minister, a very fine man.

But that's not the worst of it. Last night, the sheriff of the county and the prosecuting attorney (Paul's description of both is "D-- fatheads") came and said that 150 men had threatened to come and kill us, or at least drive us out of town, and they would not guarantee our safety. There was a lot more than that of course, such as the threat of the sheriff that he was going to Governor Clark with a request for an official stand and that

*April 17, 1942*  
*we were Japs and nothing else. Oh, we*  
*might not be spies but —*

*Phone calls started coming in*  
*that did they mean by letting 65 J's*  
*pollute the fair city of Moscow?*

*Etc., ad infinitum.*

*The sheriff has already reached*



Boise, the capital, and we are having  
 our brief because if Gov. Clark  
 makes a statement, it will mean  
 national publicity for tomorrow - for  
 us. Not only that, the army here  
 might decide that we are dangerous  
 to the community and order us  
 either eastward or back to Seattle.

The president of the U. of Idaho, as  
 usual, vacillates back and forth  
 like a weather-vane, keeping  
 his ear attuned to the political winds.

Altogether we are having a  
 jolly time. Martha, Mrs. Hall, is a  
 naturalized German, <sup>new</sup> having come  
 from Germany only 8 yrs. ago. Paul  
 is a naturalized Canadian which is  
 a bit better. Right before last,  
 nearly the whole faculty was over  
 discussing the matter. Some, like  
 Paul, are excited and denouncing the  
 "fuddy-duddies" at every step, and  
 others, like Prof. Critchard of art,  
 calm and objective. The general  
 opinion seemed to be that the  
 sheriff was putting on a big bluff  
 trying to scare us out of the state.



"Twenty years I've been sheriff. I'm an honest man and a brave man, but I say to you, I would never deputize our own citizens to protect these Japs." Can't you just see the pompous old ass. The prosecuting attorney was even worse. He was sitting in the kitchen while they were there, to avoid embarrassment.

The Watts were afraid of a mob coming up to do ~~hard~~ harm that night so they put the baby at a friend's home and we went to bed, expecting to be found murdered the next morning.

Nothing has happened, yet, however. I forgot to mention the fact that there is a feud, unspoken but nevertheless very real, between the faculty and the people of the town. The latter think that the professors hold themselves too good for the rest and one of the old women even said that the faculty wives see too many Hollywood pictures and so want Jap nails. Hub.



As Hertha says, isn't it a sad commentary on the much-vaunted fairness of the American people that such things, things that happen exactly the same way in other countries supposed to be so different from here, can and do happen right here in a typical American small town.

We ourselves, especially Marion and I as sociologists, ahem, are enjoying this business hugely. We have been warned that if violence threatens Saturday, when all the bums congregate at the town beer parlor, we may have to spend the night in the city jail, so naturally we are looking forward to that. Wednesday afternoon, all three of us ventured "downtown" with young Peter Hatt, feeling all the way the covert glances of people along the street and in shops.

In a way I hate to think of all the excitement dying down, because when it does, this town will be the deadest place on earth. No mountains, you know, and no water, trees, or traffic even. There is one roly poly bus that meanders slowly by once in a great while, with one customer or so bouncing around in it. It's a nice, clean little place, though, and livable, when I think of Toppenish or Puyallup. Be sure and let me know when you and the others make the great trek and tell me in as much detail as I am now of what gives here. I'm enclosing a newspaper article, condensed from the Idahonian, Moscow paper, and much toned down. So you see, we reverberated clear to Spokane.

Maxianne is Misako Kondo in a junior edition. She is a very good nurse of infants, though, and a good cook, surprisingly. She may go to Chicago, incidentally, though this is still a hope more than anything else. I miss Marion terribly today, and of course Chihiro. Also my baggage hasn't arrived yet, and I'm tired of wearing the same clothes eternally.

How is the family and all the Commons bums? By the by, I'll write them separately, when I have time, so burn this as soon as you read it. I don't think it would be wise to keep it, or to pass it on. If no one hears from me within another couple weeks, you can tell them what probably happened. Gruesome, isn't it?

Yuri

P. S. My address, notice, is 203 So. Howard St. instead of what I gave you. The post-office here is peculiarly thick-brained they tell me. and mail addressed even to MR. Hatt, if it has the wrong address just doesn't ~~even~~ get here.