Chapter 14: BREAKING A RECORD

Saturday, January 8, 1944
Breakfast: French toast, coffee, grapefruit
Lunch: rice, salted beef and beans, salted beef soup, tea
Dinner: rice, brownie, nimono (potatoes, salted meat, carrots), salted beef soup, tea

I don’t know if this is just a rumor but someone insisted that it was true. Anyway, I will write it down and see what happens later. The U.S. soldiers, who had landed on the Bougainville Island, had apparently lost control over the sea and sky against the Japanese army. They were waiting to be annihilated, but then the Japanese army had left them as they were and had said, “We won’t take these soldiers as prisoners until the Tule Lake event gets solved.”

The following is true, not rumor: I heard today that someone had measured the outside of the stockade. It was probably an investigation by the Red Cross. I don’t know if this is related but the army ordered two or three men from our room to be moved to Barrack E. The problem was who was willing to move since we had shared this room for such a long time. After all, we had taken turns going in there just to sleep.

A few days ago, I had negotiated with the administration to return the confiscated belongings. They had said, “We will give them back to you when everything in the stockade has calmed down.” Since there is a shortage of necessary goods, I am sure some valuables are still missing.

Nogawa and Hamamoto were discharged. The count is now: 217

Today, they brought back a few items they had confiscated. There is no doubt that this is why they are making excuses. Today’s roll call was done outside. A lieutenant, a colonel, two majors and a few others came to inspect us. For the first time, they were not accompanied by armed soldiers. We decided that each of the six barracks should take turns cleaning up.

The work that we used to do has been stopped. The atmosphere has changed since we took an open vote, but it is still tense. Only time will soften things. We had started our struggle in solidarity and had been working towards one goal, but it cannot be helped that different views would come up and that there would be those who would want to give up and those who would want to continue fighting until the very end.

I couldn’t sleep last night again, so I took a shower. (I was surprised by how much dirt came off of me since I hadn’t taken a shower for such a long time.) I also did the laundry. (I hadn’t done the laundry, thinking that I would be returning to camp soon, but considering today’s situation, we have no idea when we will be released.) I went to the kitchen at four, ate some breakfast and then, went back to bed, but I was awakened by a noise from outside around seven o’clock.
Hashimoto, a young man who had been brought in a few days ago due to a curfew violation, came to visit again. He said he came back in because there was nothing interesting going on outside of the stockade. I found it curious that he should say that. And it is true. It is more interesting inside the stockade.

**Sunday, January 9, 1944**

Breakfast: pancakes, coffee  
Lunch: bread, sausages, boiled carrots, cabbage, tea  
Dinner: rice and curry (potato, carrots, beef), tea

I heard that the supporters of the camp strike all surrendered and that the camp residents will return to work tomorrow. This means we will continue to be labeled as troublemakers until who knows when. And I still don’t know why we’ve been detained. Someone must’ve been manipulating the situation. What led us into this present situation? They said that if we protested, it would accomplish nothing and would lead to more arrests. This is what our people are facing in the U.S. during the war.

There is only four pounds of food per day to feed 217 people. I hear there is a food shortage. How miserable to be on the losing side. The once raucous rooms have become quiet these days. It is beginning to feel tranquil, and I am enjoying the peacefulness every day.

I heard that at the Folsom State Penitentiary, the prisoners went on a hunger strike due to a sugar shortage. The hunger strike ended on the sixth day, which is considered a record in the U.S. I vaguely remember that they were demanding an increase in the amount of pies and cakes. This means that our hunger strike in the stockade was a record breaker but we gained nothing but having to acquiesce and say “yes, yes” to everything the administration demands. This is so laughable that I’m speechless.

I wrote to Yuriko for the first time in a long time. She must have been worried about me.

I was worried to know that you were sick. I am happy to know that you are better. It must have been very difficult.

1. Take Wakamomo, eat grilled garlic. Don’t let the children go outside. Take vitamin pills.  
2. I am in good health because I eat garlic every day so I don’t catch a cold.  
3. I heard how you are all doing from Mr. Nakano. The pipe is the best souvenir ever. I never expected that we have this kind of New Year. But the day will come when our justice is recognized and it won’t be long before I get out of the stockade. Where I am, my spirit is bright because I am right.  
   That’s all

I read the historical story series.