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**What I Remember of the Evacuation- Poem Analysis**

During World War II, my grandmother’s family had to give up their home in Germany to the U.S. Army. She told me how she and her sister were almost killed by a plane shooting down at them. The war impacted everyone in her family, who had to show resistance despite feeling powerless and fearful. In comparison, the family in Joy Kogawa’s *“What Do I Remember of the Evacuation”*, shows their compassion for one another and their adjustment to society during tough times. Through the parents’ comforting of their children, the hardships that the Japanese people in the poem went through, and the racist comments made towards the character, we learn that there are many hurdles to overcome when suffering from racism to continue with life.

First, the poem describes the parents soothing their children is one example of suppressing the suffering that racism holds. When the evacuation started, the character’s parents comforted them to help each other out in the hard times. For instance, the character’s father tells them “about the mountain and the train and the excitement of going on a trip.” (1-3). He is masking the Japanese-Canadian Internment as a nice trip into the Rocky Mountains for his children’s sake. Masking the truth helps the children cope with the fact that they’ll never see their old home and friends again. The children also aid their mother by “pretending to fall asleep so [mother] would be happy.” (7). Everyone in the character’s family is helping each other overcome the racism shown in the internment to lead to a new life.

Another example of overcoming racism are the hardships that the Japanese people went through. After the character grew up, she heard that the Japanese were “herded into Hastings Park like cattle.” (9-10). The Japanese were rounded up and had to abandon “everything, leaving pets and possession at gun point.” (12-13). They had to leave everything behind and start from scratch in a new town. They had to travel east of the Rocky Mountains to start anew. Before their departure,” families were broken apart and men were forced to work.” (14-15). These hardships that the Japanese had to suffer eventually lead to them suppressing the racism and started to begin a new life.

Furthermore, the racist comments made towards the character plays a big impact in overcoming racism. One impactful example is when Lorraine Life viciously ‘jokes’ by saying “Don’t insult me” (31-32) when the character tried to write her name in Japanese. The character felt like she didn’t belong in Canada because she came from a different place and is a different race. Even after the war ended, “Lorraine and her friends spat on [Japanese people] anyway”. This confirms that the war affected people’s view on Japan. War changes people’s perspective on the world. Lorraine changed and bullied the character because she was Japanese. Thankfully, some people did not blame the war on the Japanese immigrants. People like “Miss Foster and Miss Tucker… who gave [the character] a puzzle to play with on the train.” (20-24) were friendly, and even helped the Japanese immigrants through the war. Many Canadians’ viewpoints changed during the war, but the ones that didn’t helped the character push through the racist comments.

Joy Kogawa’s *“What I Remember of the Evacuation”* descriptively defines how there are many hurdles to overcome racism to continue living life peacefully. These hurdles are surpassed due to the comfort provided by the character’s family, the hardships the Japanese people endured in the poem, and the racist comments directed towards the character. If we ever want to prevent this kind of racism from happening again, we cannot stereotype a race for what their superiors decides. We must not choose the easy route and learn from our mistakes.