



Camp Notes and Other Writings

by Mitsuye Yamada

DESCRIPTION

Honorable Mention of the 1999 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Awards

Two collections by an important Asian American writer -- *Camp Notes and Other Poems* and *Desert Run: Poems and Stories* -- return to print in one volume.

Paperback

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Mitsuye Yamada was born in Kyushu, Japan, and raised in Seattle, Washington, until the outbreak of World War II when her family was removed to a concentration camp in Idaho. *Camp Notes and Other Writings* recounts this experience.

Yamada's poetry yields a terse blend of emotions and imagery. Her twist of words creates a twist of vision that make her poetry come alive. The weight of her cultural experience—the pain of being perceived as an outsider all of her life—permeates her work.

Yamada's strength as a poet stems from the fact that she has managed to integrate both individual and collective aspects of her background, giving her poems a double impact. Her strong portrayal of individual and collective life experience stands out as a distinct thread in the fabric of contemporary literature by women.

"The core poems of *Camp Notes* and the title come from the notes I had taken when I was in camp, and it wasn't published until thirty years after most of it was written. I was simply describing what was happening to me, and my thoughts. But, in retrospect, the collection takes on a kind of expanded meaning about that period in our history. As invariably happens, because Japanese American internment became such an issue in American history, I suppose I will be forever identified as the author of *Camp Notes*. Of course, I try to show that it's not the only thing I ever did in my whole life; I did other things besides go to an internment camp during World War II. So, in some ways I keep producing to counteract that one image that gets set in the public mind. At the time that I was writing it, I wasn't necessarily a political person. Now, when I reread it, even to myself, I think it probably has a greater warning about the dangers of being not aware, not aware of one's own rights, not aware of helping other people who may be in trouble. I think that it does speak to our present age very acutely." -- **Mitsuye**

Yamada, "You should not be invisible": An Interview with Mitsuye Yamada, *Contemporary Women's Writing*, March 2014, Vol. 8 Issue 1

Read the whole interview at: <https://academic.oup.com/cww/article/8/1/1/414906/You-should-not-be-invisible-An-Interview-with>

AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

MITSUYE YAMADA is the founder of MultiCultural Women Writers and co-editor of an anthology of the group's work, *Sowing Ti Leaves: Writings by MultiCultural Women*.

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