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Bright Light, Black Rain

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Bright Light, Black Rain

HIKARU SHINAGAWA

ENG 471 (Studies: Poetry)
Mentor: Dr. Jonathan Morse

Artist Statement

This short poem is meant to convey the horrors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was born in Hiroshima and have family in the city, so the question of the bombings is something that hits very close to home.

What pushed me to write this was several statements made by Shigeru Ishiba, former Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. Shigeru has stated that Japan should maintain the capacity to build nuclear weapons (Dawson), and in late 2017 argued that Japan should allow the United States military to deploy nuclear weapons in Japanese territory (“Beigun kaku”). Such statements contradict current Japanese policy, which has followed the Three Non-Nuclear Principles—to not possess, to not build, and to not allow into Japan any nuclear weapons. Alarmingly, Shigeru Ishiba seems to be the leading choice take over the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan because the current Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has been unable to shake off several corruption scandals (McCurry).

The memory of the bomb still is strong in some places of Japan, especially in my birthplace. That said, it has been more than 70 years since the bombings took place. After that much time the memory may start to feel distant to some. Statements such as the ones that Shigeru Ishiba have made, which would have been political suicide only several decades ago, now seem to be slowly becoming at least tolerated by the general populace.

With my poem I seek to remind people of the destruction that nuclear weapons cause. If we remember what happened on that fateful morning in August, 1945 I do not believe that people would approve of the types of policies that people like Shigeru Ishiba promote.



Currently I am a senior at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, pursuing an English major and a Japanese minor. I may change that Japanese minor into a double major in the near future, and plan on pursuing a higher degree in Creative Writing. This poem was written as an expression of my feelings towards some current events occurring at the time it was written, and it went through many different drafts before it finally settled into its current form. I felt like I had to share this in order to help spread the message that I put in it. I struggled in finding the right words to use to convey my message and keep to the structure I chose.

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BRIGHT LIGHT, BLACK RAIN

A bright light burns.
 A strong wind sweeps.
 and buries me in rubble, so deep.
 Lonely shadows stand.
 The city is but sand.
 A mushroom rises in the sky.

A black rain falls.
 A curse follows.
 and we must live in its shadow.
 We lie sick on beds,
 with drips for the meds.
 We wait to hear from our loved ones.

Countless years pass,
 Somehow we last.
 Yet that day shall never leave us.
 Mom has gone missing
 and dad has gone blind
 This could not have been deserved.

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