

Manzanar

By Tom Russell

He said, My name is Nakashimau
I am a proud American.
I came here in '27,
From my homeland of Japan.
And I picked your grapes and oranges,
Saved some money, bought a store.
Until 1942,
Pearl Harbor, and the War.

Came the relocation orders,
They took our house, the store, the car,
And they drove us through the desert,
To a place called Manzanar.
A Spanish word for apple orchards,
Though we saw no apple trees.
Just the rows of prison barracks,
With the barbed wire boundaries.

Chorus:

And we dream of apple blossoms
Waving free beneath the stars,
Till we wake up in the desert,
The prisoners of Manzanar,
Manzanar.

Fifty years have all but vanished,
And now I am an old man.
But I don't regret the day
That I came here from Japan.
But on moonless winter nights,
I often wish upon a star,
That I'd forget the shame and sorrow,
That I felt at Manzanar.

Chorus