

Snow falling on cedars



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Tiara Washington “ We are those pioneers who cleared the bush and the forest with our hand, the gardeners tending and attending the soil with our tenderness, the fishermen who are flung from the sea to flounder in the dust of the prairies. ” Japanese Canadians were forced to leave their homes. This relocation of the Japanese Canadians to internment camps during the Second World War caused obvious feelings of betrayal. This betrayal, along with other emotions, is portrayed by Joy Kogawa in this passage from her novel *Obasan*.

By her use of diction, repetition, and point of view shift, Kogawa perfectly depicts the trials and tribulations associated with this uprooting of the Japanese Canadians. In this passage, it is unmistakable that Kogawa’s use of diction sets the melancholy mood of the piece. It also helps keep the authentic feel of the narrator being of Japanese descent. “ We are leaving the B. C. coast – rain, cloud, mist - an air overladen with weeping,” starts off the passage, overwhelming you with a sense of sadness.

The choice of the word overladen emphasizes the immense amount of sadness there is, causing the reader to empathize with the narrator and the rest of the Japanese Canadians. Additionally, words like “ Kawaiiso,” “ o-nesan,” and “ obasan” keep the audience mindful of the narrator’s Japanese descent. With the piece’s setting, this is of utter importance. On the other hand, Kogawa uses the repetition of “ we are” when describing the Japanese Canadians on this journey to a new “ home. “ We are the Issei and the Nisei and the Sansei, the Japanese Canadians. ” By using this repetition, Kogawa drives home the point that due to the situation at hand, they are forced to be a unit. “ The train is full of strangers. But even strangers are addressed as ‘

ojisan' or ' obasan,' meaning uncle or aunt. " Her repetition helps the reader understand that despite the fact that they are put into this horrid situation, they are in some way family.

Lastly, in the passage, Kogawa shifts point of view. In the beginning of the passage the narrator uses the pronoun " we" and then when describing he or she's personal experience, uses the pronoun " I. " This shift in point of view draws the attention off of the group as a whole and onto the narrator solely. When this shift occurs it brings attention to the story that follows. Shifting points of view is a good tactic to keep the reader interesting.