

Name _____

Date _____



Yuri Kochiyama

All in this together now,
Only we can make it better now.
Consciousness is power; it's yours, for real.
Yuri said tomorrow's world is yours to build.

Japanese immigrant parents planted American roots,
Yuri Kochiyama, a leader and fighter for truth.
1920s, she was born an LA youth.
She studied journalism at San Pedro High School.
'41, Pearl Harbor, declarations of war,
Used to side eyes, but they turned into more:
Legal discrimination against American citizens,
Japanese descent treated as criminal evidence.
Pops seized by the feds, locked for six weeks,
Too sick to speak, he died the day after release.
9066, that was innocence's end.
The Executive Order established concentration camps—
Excuse me, "internment" was the word they used,
But you can't intern a citizen. They disguised the truth.
120,000 forced to live in a wasteland,
Yuri among them, her family and friends
Writing letters to the Nisei soldiers risking their lives
For a country that denied their families' human rights,
Hungry for progress, fighting to advance,
Hearts burning for justice, like the sun over the camp.

You know we're all in this together now.

Only we can make it better now.

Consciousness is power; it's yours, for real.

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You cannot call it justice if it's just for you,

Oppress the working class under the red, white, and blue.

What gets done in the dark will be uncovered.

We are all a part of one another.

Yuri and her husband Bill sought the city life,

Lived in Harlem and got involved in the heart of civil rights.

Putting Black, Asian, Latinx struggles into perspective,

She saw every social justice movement as interconnected.

Got arrested for protesting, what a time in history,

'Cause that's the same time she met Malcolm X in 1963.

Became close friends, superhero vibes, they were ride-or-die,

Fought together. On the day he died, she was by his side.

Continued rallying, too many to name in a sentence:

Workers' rights, Vietnam, Puerto Rican independence.

Japanese internees, kept that vision intact,

Leading to reparations through the Civil Liberties Act.

Yuri for the kids, pushing us to fight for control,

An activist who stayed active till she was 90 years old.

Passed on June 1st, 2014, but we'll never forget,

So even though this is where her story ends, her legacy lives on.

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