

Set in Japan in the mid-1960s, Misawa (A Song of the Machi) is a richly illustrated story of a fabled Air Force intelligence command. USAFSS troops carried Top Secret clearances and lived by the motto: Freedom Through Vigilance.

Misawa: A Song of the Machi

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MISAWA

A Song of the Machi

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The author is especially grateful to USAFSS veterans Dan Riss and Dan Tholen for access to their files of Misawa photographs taken in the mid-1960s. Their photographs and all others included in this book are used by permission. Peter Rimar's classic portrait of the Misawa train conductor, taken forty years after the events recorded in this story, captures the timelessness of the Misawa many of us remember.

With the exception of those persons and events noted in the back section entitled *Just the Facts, Airman*, all characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

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Table of Contents

Preface: War's End	xi
Part One: Songs For a Bright Morning.....	1
Chapter One: Showdown at the Hachi Ryokan	5
Chapter Two: Happy Trails at Lake Towada	18
Chapter Three: Sailing on the Oirase-Maru.....	31
Chapter Four: Midnight Omelets at Old Glenn Hall	44
Chapter Five: A Very Chicago Christmas	57
<i>Images: Lake Towada</i>	<i>67</i>
Part Two: Songs For the Heat of Day.....	85
Chapter Six: The Night We Lost the Stand	89
Chapter Seven: My Watch is at the Diamond Pawn.....	100
Chapter Eight: Looking For Yakitori Papasan	107
Chapter Nine: Dimies at the Static Club.....	116
Chapter Ten: Toy's Story	123
<i>Images: Winter's Fire</i>	<i>133</i>
Part Three: Songs For a Quiet Afternoon.....	147
Chapter Eleven: A Dawg's Life on the Hill	151
Chapter Twelve: The Drinking Clubs of Misawa.....	160
Chapter Thirteen: Shopping at J.C. Penney's.....	168
Chapter Fourteen: Operation Eyesight - Play Ball!	172
Chapter Fifteen: Our Kind of Off Limits Places	177
<i>Images: Misawa City.....</i>	<i>191</i>
Part Four: Songs For the Cool of Evening	213
Chapter Sixteen: An Invitation to the White House	217
Chapter Seventeen: Short Timers in Sharkskin Suits	225
Chapter Eighteen: One Night at the Black Pearl	231
Chapter Nineteen: Going TDY to Wakkanai.....	238
Chapter Twenty: The Sea of Okhotsk	249
<i>Images: Security Hill.....</i>	<i>261</i>

GEORGE WELCH

Part Five: Songs For the Night to Come.....281
 Chapter Twenty-One: Sayonara, Mimatsu 285
Epilogue: Meet Me at the Stateside, Honey..... 289
Endnotes: Just the Facts, Airman 297
About the Author 303

Chapter One:
Showdown at the Hachi Ryokan
August 1965

That tall gangly book writer from the hills of Carolina was close enough for government business which, of course, is what we were involved in, so I'd say: give the man a cigar. I would have slightly modified his saying so that it came out like this: "You can't go home again after you've slept at the Hachi Ryokan."

What is the Hachi Ryokan? Oh, my! You're asking a lot of an old man to explain all of that. I will try however. Every building has a story but the Hachi Ryokan has files and volumes. Edifices like the Hachi Ryokan contain the knowledge of all the world's youth and naivety. Our earliest follies were committed at the Hachi Ryokan. You remember. Sure, you do.

The Hachi Ryokan, as it names implies, was a hotel. If you exited the Main Gate of Misawa Air Base in the summer of 1965, you passed several tailor shops on your right, among them the establishments of Charlie Chen who owned Ah Kong Tailors, Roy Tatsumi, Mr. James S. Lee (my personal favorite), Tony at Anthony's Tailors and others. On your left, on the other side of the street, was the Stateside Snack Bar. In another country, in an earlier time, we sang, "Meet me in St. Louis, Louie" but in Misawa a more familiar refrain was "Meet me at the Stateside, honey." The Stateside Snack Bar was often the first and last stop of an evening's journey into the well known and lesser-known (and more dimly lighted) alleyways that constituted the Misawa most of us knew at that time.

Blue skies.

That's the way I remember Misawa in late August of 1965. It's become almost a joke. A hundred years or so after I left Misawa, I confided to an old Air Force friend that I could not remember it ever raining in Misawa.

"You've got to be kidding, Granny!" he said. "It rained alla time in Missy! Doncha remember the trip we took to Towada? Rained like a son-of-a-gun all day long! You looked like a drowned rat before we got back to town."

And then I remembered. Misawa had every kind of weather you could imagine and we young men of Uncle Sam's Air Force whose uniforms resembled those of the U.S. Postal Service adopted the postman's motto as

GEORGE WELCH

our own: Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet nor dark of night would keep us from our appointed rounds.

And they never did.

Visions and dreams the Bible says. Young men and old men trying to figure it all out. The story is young and the story is old and by the time we get around to telling it who knows the difference between visions and dreams, between truth and fiction?

One problem in storytelling is what to put into the story. Another is what to leave out. I will try to tell as much as I can while leaving out very little. If I forget something along the way—which is highly probable—then I will just make something up to take its place. It doesn't matter at all, really. Misawa was the kind of city where anything could happen and almost everything did.

There were blue skies that day. I am sure of it.

The hard rains would come later.

They sent a posse to get us that first day.

My roomie—Gene Thibodeaux—and I had been on Misawa Air Base only a little over 24 hours. In that one incredible month of August 1965, we had graduated from radio ops school at Keesler Air Force in Biloxi, Mississippi, spent a few weeks at home with the folks in East Texas, then after finding our separate ways to San Francisco had boarded a Northwest Orient airliner which carried us over the vast Pacific Ocean to a very modern airfield at Tachikawa Air Base near Tokyo. Three days later we flew north to Misawa, a small city of 40,000 souls located in Aomori Prefecture.

The Land of the Rising Sun.

That's the way we thought of it then. We were very young. Gene had just turned 19 and I was still 18 when we arrived at Misawa to begin our work in military intelligence. Just boys—East Texas boys at that—is what we were. Armed with Top Secret Codeword clearances and the light of youth still burning brightly in our eyes, we were ready to face anything.

Or so we thought.

Then these 20 or so unruly guys showed up at our door.

“Get your rear in gear, Tex,” said one of them; a huge fellow who we later learned went by the name of Fearless John. “You too, Louise. We're taking you jeeps to the Machi.”

“Who's this Louise?” Gene asked indignantly. “And what's a machi?”

MISAWA

“Well, we know Tex here is from Texas,” said Fearless. “He won’t shut up about it. And we figured anyone named Thibodeaux has to be from Louisiana.”

“We’re both from Texas,” I said. “We’ve known each other all our lives. You gonna tell us what a ‘machi’ is or are we supposed to keep guessing?”

“Whew! Have we got jeeps here or what, me Dawgies? A machi is a city and that’s where you’re going to spend the next few hours so let’s get it rolling.”

After all these years, I know I don’t have the names right but they were a fair representation of what the Air Force looked like in those days. Mostly white guys, a handful of Blacks, one or two Hispanics, some you couldn’t identify without more information.

Theoretically, Misawa was still segregated in those days. There were areas that catered to Blacks almost exclusively, but most of the establishments—by tradition—were lily-white. Just like America. Those who sold us our whiskey and other essentials in Misawa wanted us to feel right at home. And we usually did.

Racial policies notwithstanding, when a group as large as ours decided to move through the Machi, we did as we pleased and brought with us anyone who joined the parade. Who was going to stop us?

Besides Fearless John—who seemed to be doing most of the talking—there was a couple of more Genes (in addition to my roomie), probably half a dozen Charlies, a Nelly, a Hank, a Romeo, a Peanut and a guy named Ripples who seemed to be laughing every time you looked at him. The black guys had the wildest names, of course, and they are easier to remember: Hound Dog, Bird Dog, Pistol and Benjo Man. Go figure. A slightly older and somewhat more serious black airman was simply called Wilbur. Mando was one of the Hispanics, maybe 23 years old, with a flattop haircut up to here, you know. Flattops were still in style although people were starting to emulate the Beatles.

Three white guys at the rear of the crowd were talking to one another: a tall drink of water named Mickey (I think) and a rather stocky fellow everyone called Soupy. The third man, who walked with a stoop and looked slightly hung over, was introduced to us later as The Kingfish.

This was the delegation that had taken upon itself the task of initiating Gene and I into the delights of the “Machi.”

A person would have to be crazy to go anywhere with this bunch.
We had no problem with crazy.

GEORGE WELCH

We went.

Our very loose formation came to a halt not too far past the Main Gate at Misawa Air Base. Fearless John surveyed the sorry lot of troops clad in civvies and shouted the command: “Dawg Flight, Halt! Right Face!”

Some of the guys were wearing the machi boots I had first heard about in training school at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. Since it was summer and it wasn’t raining (I’m sure of that on this day) most of us were sporting the loafers that were so popular back in those days. On my own feet was my favorite pair of Weeguns, light brown and well acquainted with the nightspots in Biloxi, New Orleans and other stateside party cities.

“Gentlemen, Jeeps especially, I give you the most famous alley in the Orient, Nakashiokoji—affectionately called ‘AP Alley’ by those of us in Uncle Sam’s Air Force Security Service. We own the place, you might say, and today you Jeeps are privileged to join us in a tour of AP Alley. This will be your first machi run. Is everyone ready?”

Some of the old Misawa vets grunted, “*Hai! Hai!*” but Gene and I were both staring down the narrow corridor that we were seeing for the very first time that summer afternoon.

AP Alley! We had heard of it in Tech School, of course, from our Morse code instructor, Tech Sergeant Sharkey. Now we were actually about to enter that fabled alley of endless anecdotes. The Alley of Dreams, someone had called it in Biloxi.

I have to admit that my first sight of Nakashiokoji—AP Alley—failed to arouse any great emotions inside me. Just a muddy lane of bars. So what?

From behind one of the doors of the 20 or so bars I could see from where I was standing came the sounds of Frankie Valli singing, “Can’t Take My Eyes Off of You.”

Frankie Valli in Misawa? Oh, brother, I thought.

“Our plans for the evening include a round trip through some of the more illustrious establishments along AP Alley,” said Fearless John.

“It is now approximately 1500 hours and we will need to be back in this exact spot by no later than 2300 hours. This will enable us to pick up a bag of chicken at the Stateside before we file aboard that old Blue Goose and make our weary way back to the Hill.”

The Hill—Security Hill—was a place of secrets. We would spend a lifetime not talking about the work we did on the Hill. We would, over the

MISAWA

period of that same lifetime, never stop talking—never stop thinking—about AP Alley. It left an indelible impression on all who ever saw it.

“We will stay together,” continued Fearless John. “We will drink one beer—no whiskey tonight, Dawgies, you’ll never make it if you start hitting the hard stuff—in each bar we visit. We will work our way up the right side of the Alley and at exactly 1900 hours—halfway through our tour—we will begin our journey back toward the gate, stopping in the bars along the left side. Our goal is 24 bars. That means each of you will be drinking 24 beers. In America that would be a case. In Misawa, with its oversized bottles, you will be drinking in excess of that. Can we do it? Are we men or Dawgs? Of course we can. To the Alley!”

My brown Weeguns were in motion. I stepped off the sidewalk onto the dusty pavement of AP Alley, feeling as though I was about to enter Never Never Land.

“I’m not going in the Pink Corner!” the stooped guy everyone called The Kingfish suddenly grunted.

“Why not?” asked Fearless.

“I had a dramatic experience in there last week,” related The Kingfish.

“He means a traumatic experience,” offered the skinny guy Mickey.

“I mean what I said—a dramatic experience,” said the Fish, whose real name, I was later to learn, was Staff Sergeant Irwin Carpenter. Carpenter later became my boss on Security Hill but in the Machi, he was very much one of the guys.

“I better not go back in there for awhile. I’ll wait for you guys next door at the Sakura.”

“No, we’re all together. We’ll skip the Pink Corner tonight. You Jeeps will have to explore it on your own later. It’s the Sakura then for the first beer of the evening. Inside and belly up to the bar, men,” ordered Fearless John.

It was the Sakura that was playing the Frankie Valli music. You could tell that as soon as you approached the door. Inside, the Sakura was a large open bar unlike most of the other places we would visit that evening.

Behind the bar was a very attractive lady in her early thirties, I imagined. Seated at the back, on the furthest bar stools from the door, however, was a group of the ugliest women I had ever seen in my life.

“You see that one in the middle back there?” asked Charlie, one of the ditty bops from Super Four. “That’s the sister of Garbage Can. You know Garbage Can, don’t you?”

GEORGE WELCH

I muttered something to the effect that I hadn't had the pleasure of making her acquaintance.

"Jeeps!" exclaimed Charlie. "Well, you'll meet the Can if you hang around AP Alley very much. The face on that woman will gag you but her sister Machi-ko there is about three times as ugly. If you can imagine that."

All this was not raising my expectations of what the night might have to offer. Why did everyone brag about this AP Alley if there was nothing here but half-empty bars patronized by ugly women? Those were my initial thoughts.

"The night is young, Jeepster," sung out the fellow everyone called Soupy. "There are better bars down the road and better-looking women. Don't give up hope yet!"

We finished our beers and headed next door to Jimmy's Nikka Bar, or so the sign outside proclaimed. Nikka, as I would find out on subsequent nights, was a very popular brand of Japanese whiskey.

"Jimmy!" Fearless John shouted at the bartender who also, I learned upon being introduced, was the owner of the place. Made sense then. Makes sense now. You would expect a guy named Jimmy to have a hand in a bar that carried his name.

"Where's everyone at, my friend?" asked Fearless. "We've got a couple of Jeeps here and we're trying to show them a good time." There wasn't a single soul inside Jimmy's except Jimmy himself.

"No show, damnit," Jimmy said. "May have to fire! Bad girls. Bad!"

"Just don't go firing Betty," said Peanut and Romeo, almost in unison. Then Peanut and Romeo looked at each other as if discovering for the first time that they both had an interest in the same josan. "You think we come in here to look at your mug, Jimmy? Betty's the best thing that ever happened around here."

"She good for business, all right," said Jimmy. "But what good she do me if she don't show up?"

We paid up for our beers and regrouped outside in the Alley.

Next door to Jimmy's was a little hole-in-the wall place called the Black Pearl. The sign and the appearance of the place had a strange appeal to me for some reason. The Black Pearl would become my favorite of all the bars along AP Alley in the 24 months I would spend in Misawa.

Since I was one of the first through the door at the Black Pearl, I grabbed a table along the wall and was immediately joined by a young girl who introduced herself as Aiko.

MISAWA

“E—I—K—O?” I asked. One of the other ugly women besides Garbage Can’s sister Machi-ko had introduced herself that way back at the Sakura. Not that I much wanted the introduction.

“No!” she said, “I spell A—I—K—O.” She took a pencil from a pocket in her blouse and wrote “Aiko-chan” on a paper napkin. “That’s how you call me,” she said.

“Aiko-chan,” I said.

“Yes?” she asked with a great smile. “You want something?”

I noticed that Aiko had not hustled me for a drink they way the josans down in Tachikawa and Tokyo had done when I first came into the country.

Aiko read my mind. “Just get a glass,” she said. “Little *biiru* I like. Not much.”

I asked for a glass at the bar and poured it half full for her.

“Kampai,” she said.

Wasn’t too hard to figure that one out. “Cheers,” I replied.

“So, what you name, Texas boy?” Aiko asked.

Everyone seemed to know I was from Texas. “Bryan,” I replied. “Bryan Thomas.”

“B-ryan. B-ryan. Nice. You from Houston, B-ryan?”

“Close enough. Beaumont. You ever heard of it?”

“Sure, I know Bo-mon! What you think? I don’t know Bo-mon. Oh, boy!”

Aiko was a cute little thing, somewhat chubbier than the average Alley girl, as I was to discover. I figured her at 115-120 pounds but everything, like they say, was in the right place.

I would have preferred to stay there awhile with Aiko but the boys were on the move again. I told her I had to leave.

“Watch out!” she said. “These boys t-rick you. They like play joke on Jeeps.”

“I’ll be careful. Real careful,” I promised her.

“Come back again,” Aiko said. “Alone. We talk. You tell to me this Bo-mon.”

“I thought you knew all about it,” I said.

“I lie,” she smiled.

Toys place was our next stop and I was beginning to have some serious doubts about whether I would last the evening. Sipping at my fourth beer and looking around at the girls Toy had working for her, I was starting to appreciate AP Alley more and more. The further in you go, I thought, the

GEORGE WELCH

better it gets. Toy herself was down at the far end of the bar talking to my buddy Gene. Gene was a fast mover but I doubt he was going to be that fast. Toy was a very attractive lady. But then, what the heck? We had two years to work our charm on the ladies. Who knew what lay in store? We certainly didn't have a clue that night.

Leaving Toys we passed a house-like structure on the right. Gene asked about it.

"That's the Hachi Ryokan," Mando answered. "Ryokan means hotel and hachi is the number eight. The address for the Ryokan is Number 8 Nakashiokoji."

"Not that you'll be picking your mail up there," said The Kingfish. "There are better hotels all over town. The Ryokan is strictly for Jeeps."

Well, I'm a Jeep, I thought, but tended to agree with Sergeant Carpenter. It was old, an old place like the Sakura, and didn't look that great. Surely there were better places to stay in Misawa.

"You don't need a hotel, anyway," said Carpenter, sounding a little drunk already. "Most of these josans have their own houses. Sooner or later, you'll find a moose and settle down. Best way to go."

"A moose?" I asked.

"A steady girl. A shack up job. Better for you, better for her. It's the Japanese way."

A few feet past the Ryokan, we entered a club called Chicago. Music was blasting out of the place and it wasn't Frankie Valli, let me assure you. It was the Stones, man, and they were rocking the Chicago that night.

"Who the hell is this?" said a tough-looking little girl who kept poking me in the ribs.

"Joanne, calm down girl, this is Tex here. He's a Jeep. You gonna scare him off before we get him initiated," warned Fearless John.

"Damn right," chimed in Nelly. "Leave our Jeeps alone. Starting tomorrow, you can mess with them but tonight they're our Jeeps."

"I mess," said Joanne. "I initiate okay. Don't need no help from you Nelly-san. This boy Tex need eat something. He too skinny. You skinny all over, Tex?"

I didn't know what to say.

"What you name, Mista Texas?" asked Joanne.

I told her and introduced her to my pal Gene.

"No good," she said. "I give you Jeeps Japanese name. You Ika-san and you friend Tako-san. Squid and octopus. Good to eat. You ever eat squid?"

"Not yet," I confessed.

MISAWA

“Well, you will,” said little Joanne, “or maybe I will, who knows?”

And she laughed and laughed.

Funny how it started but those were the names, the Japanese names, that Gene and I carried throughout our tour of Misawa. Later, under other circumstances, Gene would acquire the English nickname “Hammerhead” and I would become known as “Granny” but not tonight.

Tonight we were the squid and the octopus.

All right by me.

I do not remember visiting the Rotary Club at all that night although Gene swears that’s where we went after leaving the Chicago. I remember coming down the stairs from the Orion—but not going up them in the first place. The Prince Stand Bar I definitely recall, although it was starting to get very, very drunk out there by the time Fearless John introduced “his Jeeps” to the bartender George and the mamasan and papasan who owned the place.

Michiko was down at the end of the narrow bar—a big group of guys was just leaving as we came in or there wouldn’t have been room to squeeze us in—playing Beatle records. There it was again, America in the Alley. “I wanna hold your hand,” the four young guys from England wailed. The 20 young guys from Security Hill on Misawa Air Base ordered beers. Again.

Directly past the Prince was the Diamond Pawn Shop. “Everybody still got yen-sies?” asked Soupy. We all did so nobody hocked anything that night. We would though. Oh, yes—we would be back to the Diamond Pawn. “Shades’ house,” said The Kingfish about the building next door to the pawnshop. “Ask me no questions and I’ll tell you no lies.” We had another beer at the Silver Wings, a small place that reminded me of some bars back home along College Street in Beaumont, Texas.

Although we had no idea whatsoever, we had reached that point at which—in five short months—a great fire would finally stop after destroying much of the city. Moving from the heart of the city, the fire would claim the Silver Wings as one of its last victims along with Shades’ house and the Diamond Pawn Shop. The Hachi Ryokan and the rest of AP Alley back toward Main Gate would survive.

“The heart of the Alley, gentleman. The jewel in her crown.” Fearless John raised both arms in salutation, “Our home away from home. Halfway through your first machi run, fellows. It’s the Stand.”

GEORGE WELCH

The Stand was an old bar by Alley standards, having been opened sometime around 1956 or 1957. Very popular among all the flights or “tricks” on Security Hill. An airman from the pioneering days had made a shield of the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) emblem and it had subsequently been nailed to the wall of the Stand. This was our turf, I was made to understand. If you’re ever in trouble and need backup, just run to the Stand. Your USAFSS buds will be there and will help you out of most kinds of trouble, especially those kinds that involved Main Base personnel.

The Stand and its USAFSS shield, of course, would burn along with much of Misawa in the Great Fire of January 1966.

Cowboy was tending bar that night with the help of several ladies. Mamasan was sitting on her regular stool by the front door. Tony—the owner of record—was nowhere to be seen.

“Dawgies,” said Mickey. “We may be approaching our limit or in fact may have exceeded it. I’m drunk as hell, in other words. How about the rest of you?”

“I think I may have overdone it,” slurred Hank.

“Me too,” several others chimed in.

“Let’s just sit here and rest a minute and finish our beers and head back to the Stateside Snack Bar for some of that boneless fried chicken. Whaddya think?” asked Mickey.

Nothing had ever sounded better to me in my life. Fried chicken!

“Yakitori Papasan’s outside,” shouted Soupy. “Put your change in my cap.”

Pretty soon, Soupy’s cap was about half full of ten-yen pieces. He left and returned in a few minutes with what must have been three or four dozen shish kabob sticks with charred meat and vegetables pieces on them.

“What kind of meat is that?” asked Gene.

“Uh, just think pork or maybe chicken,” replied Soupy.

“Dog meat. That’s what it is. Dog on a stick,” someone suggested.

We had no choice. We were starving. We scarfed it down.

“These other places will have to wait,” said The Kingfish. “If I don’t get some of that damn fried chicken pretty quick, I’m gonna die. Just make a mental note, fellows. You definitely don’t want to miss the Metro next door or the Inferno above it. Chiisai at the Flamingo is probably the prettiest girl in the Alley but her dance card is always full. Don’t get your hopes up there. The New Tokyo is one of my favorites but you don’t want to miss the Top Hat, the Rhythm or the Cave either. There all good places but you’ve got

MISAWA

two years to drink in them. We just shouldn't have tried to run them all in one night. Better men than us have tried to do that and have failed miserably."

"What time is it, anyway, Sarge?" asked Hank. "My watch is in the pawn shop."

"Again? Well, good Lord, it's 2300 hours, boys. We better get on back to the Stateside before curfew catches us."

And with that, The Kingfish and the rest of the group was off and running toward the snack bar and that much-anticipated fried chicken.

I never made it. I don't know why. Something happened. I don't know if I passed out or what but suddenly Gene and most of the others were gone and I was being escorted into a building that looked vaguely familiar. Then I recognized it. The Hachi Ryokan.

Fearless John was giving some money to the mamasan, an attractive lady somewhere in her middle forties, I suspected. Some minutes or hours—I don't know—later I woke up on a futon that rested on a raised platform somewhere within the Hachi Ryokan.

Mamasan opened the sliding door slightly and said, "You wait."

I should have left right then but two things stopped me. First, I knew it had to be past curfew. How would I get back to the Main Gate? Second, I wasn't all that sure I could walk. I had never been this wasted in my life.

The sliding door opened again on a vision straight out of Hell.

Machi-ko. Garbage Can's uglier sister. She was smiling. I think.

Machi-ko didn't stand there too long. There was some kind of commotion going on, a lot of shouting in Japanese that I, of course, could not understand. Suddenly, the sliding door slammed shut again. I was alone in the room and wondering what in the hell was going on.

The door opened. Mamasan said again, "You wait." I was beginning to think these might be the only two English words the old lady knew.

Obviously a fight of some kind was taking place right outside my room. Someone was thrown up against the paper-thin wall, nearly bringing it down. I prepared myself for whatever course of action was going to be necessary to get myself out of this fix. There was a slapping sound and the kind of high-pitched female screaming for which you don't need an interpreter.

Suddenly, all was quiet and the door to my room began to slide open again. Anticipating Mamasan ordering me to "wait" again, I was totally

GEORGE WELCH

shocked out of my senses to see little Aiko-chan from the Black Pearl enter my room and close the door behind her.

“Damn bitch!” she said. “I kill her she do it again!”

“Aiko-chan,” I said. “What are you doing here?”

“I told you watch out, B-ryan!” she cried. “Them boys t-rick you. That woman bad and this a bad place. Come on. We go my house.”

“I don’t think I can, Aiko. I don’t think I can walk. If you think we’re all right here, let’s stay until morning and then I’ll walk you home.”

“We be okay,” she said, smiling. “You think you can’t walk. You ought to see Machi-ko. She can’t walk at all. Maybe I b-reak leg. I don’t know.”

“Come here,” I said.

She came.

“I didn’t know you were so tough. You surprised me.”

“Aiko not so tough. Just mad. I stay with you tonight, okay? You tell me about this Bo-mon Texas. I listen. We sleep.”

So, we talked about Bo-mon Texas and the city of Aomori where Aiko was born and many other things.

We hardly slept at all.

In the morning when we left my Weeguns were missing from where I had removed them by the front door.

“Take boots,” Aiko said.

“Boots?”

“Machi boots. Man who take your shoes leave these boots. Even swap! These machi boots will remind you of the night I save you from Machi-ko.”

Remarkably, I still have them 45 years later and I never look at them without thinking of that one and only night I spent at the Hachi Ryokan.

Aiko had a small house about a mile up Yellowpole road toward Furimaki. We became a “couple” in Misawa for a while and anyone who saw us together could tell we were very, very happy.

The years bank up much as the snows used to do in AP Alley and in the summer of 2010 I found myself thinking of the Hachi Ryokan and how little Aiko-chan came to my rescue that night.

Having slept in the Hachi Ryokan, I actually did return home to Beaumont, Texas when my tour ended two years later. It wasn’t the same, however. Mom and my Stepfather were dealing with the problems that would soon lead to their divorce. Other things were changing.

MISAWA

The songs we heard that night in AP Alley were new songs, most of them in the Top 100, some even lower than that. Now they are called "standards" or Golden Oldies and the singers—if they are alive at all—have grown old.

AP Alley itself went under the bulldozer five years ago. Urban renewal they call it. Combined with a healthier-minded, more serious military.

The years bank up. I never heard from Aiko-chan after I left Misawa. God knows what happened to her.

God knows.

Set in Japan in the mid-1960s, Misawa (A Song of the Machi) is a richly illustrated story of a fabled Air Force intelligence command. USAFSS troops carried Top Secret clearances and lived by the motto: Freedom Through Vigilance.

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