

Sugihara

David Rovics

He grew up in Gi - fu on the is - lands of Ja - pan He was
sent off to Man - chu - ri - a That's where this ta - le be - gan For his next as - sign - ment in the
di - plo - ma - tic core Was far - off Li - thu - a - ni - a and the Eu - ro - pe - an war My grand -
fa - ther was from Kra - kow the Na - zis came he fled He took his fam - ly to Vil - ni - us So they
might not end up dead But the Pan - zers were ad - van - cing And he knew they had to go But he
had to have a vi - sa and all the em - bas - sies said no Al - though I ne - ver met him When
all is said and done I - I - I - I am Su - gi - ha - ra's son

There was only one final possibility
The last consulate left open, the Third Reich's Asian ally
There in Lithuania there was no time to lose
They came asking for a visa, thousands of Polish Jews
The diplomat called Tokyo, "can I grant them this reprieve?"
Three times he got his answer, "tell them all to leave"
He looked into their eyes, talked to his family
He and his wife decided we must set these people free

Chorus

Disobeying orders that they knew to be wrong
Sempo and Yukiko started writing all day long
A month's worth of visas in every twenty-hour day
Sempo and Yukiko could turn no refugee away
Word came from the empire, it's time to turn it in
You're closing down your consulate and moving to Berlin
They knew they did the right thing, of this they had no doubt
They threw visas through the window as their train pulled out

Chorus

My grandfather crossed Siberia for five times the normal cost
Fearing for the future with every minute lost
He got the ferry to Kobe then to Occupied Shanghai
There he spent the war years while back home his people died
Sugihara-san did not seek any praise from anyone
When he died the paper said his neighbors knew not what he'd done
But there are forty thousand people living lives today
Without Sempo Sugihara I would not be here now to say

Chorus