

The motor began its hum of power with the first touch of my foot on the starter button. I rolled down the front windows on both sides of the car and sat there letting the motor warm up for a few moments.

Somehow, reading the morning paper at the hotel this morning had filled my mind with concern about how things were going out there in the Pacific where Japanese and American military forces were clawing at each other in deadly earnest.

What a change in my life since that shocking Sunday now only a little over four months ago when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Everything was changed for everyone. No one knew for sure what the future would bring. Some of my friends were already in the service and others were busy with plans to move to new locations where they could work in war related industries. I was 33 and registered for the draft. This was a time of innumerable questions without answers when hatred, patriotism, suspicion and intolerance rampaged <sup>through</sup> the country.

As I backed the car from the parking stall, turned toward the lot entrance and drove out onto the street <sup>heading</sup> and headed east, I was thinking about my home in Bakersfield two hours south on highway 99. I was thinking about my wife Grace and our first child that we were expecting that summer. Grace was teaching art at Bakersfield High School and was hopeful she would be able to finish out the school year which would be over the first week in June. That was only a month away. She was probably up and busy about the house fixing breakfast for her mother, herself and Jane. Her mother had been living with us several months following her release from a prolonged hospital stay. Jane was a teenage high school senior that needed a home during her final high school year. Another hour would find Grace on her way to her first class for the day.