When the Emperor was Divine

Comprehension Questions thru page 105

**Part II. Train**  
1. How much time has passed since the family left its home and what has happened in the interim?  
  
2. Why have the girl’s shoes gone unpolished since spring?  
  
3. What sights draw her attention as she gazes out the train window?  
  
4. Why does the soldier tell her to pull her shades down?  
  
5. What might account for the boy’s newfound interest in horses? How do the grownups around him treat this interest? What about their responses might be confusing to him?  
  
6. When the girl asks Ted Ishimoto if he is a rich man, he says “Not anymore.” [p. 33] What might account for his answer?  
  
7. Do you think the girl’s story about her father is true? Why or why not, and if it isn’t true what might be her reason for telling it? Why does she later tell Ted that her father never writes to her?  
  
8. What is striking about the boy saying that he forgot his umbrella? Is he telling a deliberate untruth or is he forgetting what actually happened? At what other points in the book do the characters suffer lapses of memory or remember events falsely?  
  
9. Why might the boy draw his father inside a square?  
  
10. What is Tanforan and what happened there? In what different ways do different characters remember it?  
  
11. During the night the train crosses the Great Salt Lake. Given that the girl is asleep at the time, who is observing this crossing? And what might this narrator mean by “the sound of the lake was inside her” [pp. 46-7]?