It's time to move our boats,” Mr. Miyazaki said. “I don’t like the look of the clouds.” My Father, my older brother, and Mr. Miyazaki put on their rain coats and went down to the bay. Mother said, “They are going to move the boats into the river. Then they will tie ropes from each boat to some trees on both sides of the river. That way, the boats won’t move very far when the wind blows.”

When Father got back, we all went to the school. When we got there, it seemed like everybody we knew was already there. There was a radio on a table, and the men were listening carefully and whispering.

Then the wind started to blow. I never heard it so loud. Then all of a sudden the front door broke, and the wind blew into the room. Some men pushed a table in front of the door and leaned against it.

Then suddenly everything seemed to get quiet. Three of the men quickly went outside, but two women stood by the door and wouldn’t let any of us children out. They said, “You can’t go out, because the second half of the storm will be here in a few minutes.”

The men carried the front door around to the back and nailed it across the door opening. Then they came back in and moved the table across the open front door. “Don’t worry,” they said, “the wind will come from the other way next time.”

They were right. It suddenly got very dark, and the wind started blowing again. So we just waited and waited, and eventually it got quiet. The men got their tools and went out; our teacher told us to stay in the school and listen to the radio.

What do you think the radio said about this storm?
You should look outside,” My friend Teresa called me on phone last night. So I got my sister and we went out on the porch. The first thing we noticed was all the snowflakes. Then Mom came out and told us to look at the color of the sky – it was a funny kind of yellow. Mom said that was because the clouds were really low, and the lights of the city made them look yellow.

The snow was really quiet at first. Then it seemed to change to rain and made little popping noises on the windows. It kept doing that even after I went to bed. When I woke up the next morning, the rain had stopped and the wind was blowing. All of a sudden I heard a cracking sound, and then another one. Dad said we should stay inside, but we could look out the window.

It was like everything was covered with diamonds. The sun made sparkles where it was shining on the trees and telephone wires. It looked really beautiful. Then I noticed some tree branches in the street. Dad said it was because the snow and ice was too heavy. Those branches couldn’t take all the extra weight and they just broke.

Then a car came along. It was really funny. The driver tried to go around the tree branches, but the wheels kept spinning on the ice. Finally the car just kind of slid sideways. My dad and Mr. O’Neill went over to push it back into the middle of the street.

That’s when we decided it would be fun to try to slide down the hill on some cardboard. When we got back, all wet and snowy, the electricity was back on, and Mom was listening to the radio.

What do you think they said about the storm on the news?

Read this story and make notes about the main points. The purpose of your notes is to help you answer two questions:

1) Did this story happen in the United States or Japan?

2) Did this story happen in a cold place in the northern part of the country, or did it happen in a warm place in the southern part of the country?
"Watch this," Father said, as he turned into our driveway. He aimed the car lights out across the low wall at the end of our parking place. The lights hit the top of the tree next to Mr. Iwamizawa’s house. In between, it was like a million little specks of light. The car lights were shining on snowflakes, millions of them, all coming down like little parachutes.

We ran out of the car, climbed over the wall, and jumped onto the ground. There, we could lie on the hillside and watch the snowflakes coming down. The car lights were making them glow. When Father turned the lights off, we climbed up to the top of the hill, and then we ran and slid all the way down. We did that again and again, until we were all out of breath.

We were really tired when we went to bed that night. Next morning, the snow was really deep.

“I remember a day like this when I was a child like you,” Mother said. “It was the year they had the Olympics here. Everyone was pretending they were Olympic skiers sliding down the hill. Would you like to learn how to slide?”

Skiing is a lot harder than it looks! We stood on a piece of cardboard and tried to slide down the hill. At first, it wouldn’t move, and then it slid really fast and we fell off. But then our neighbor Noburo came over with real skis. We watched him slide across the snow. It was like magic, how far he could go with each step.

The snow made everything quiet. Mother asked if we knew why. She said it was because no one could make their car go anywhere – the snow was too deep.

What do you think the TV news said about this storm?
“SSHh” my father said, “We need to listen.” The radio announcer was using words like “landfall” and “category 3,” which didn’t make much sense to me. But Daddy was definitely worried. He said, “I’m going to the store to get some more wood.”

When he got back, he and Mr. Sanchez started nailing boards on the outside of our windows. Weird! Mom told us to go outside and bring all our toys and even our bicycles under the porch. Double weird!

Then it got windy, and Daddy said we should all go into the bedroom. We brought the radio in with us, but we could hardly hear it. The wind got louder and louder. It seemed like the whole house shook. The noise was like a hundred jet planes at the same time.

Then suddenly it got real quiet. I got up and started to go toward the door, but Daddy yelled, “Don’t go out now. It’s way too dangerous.” I asked why, but all he said was “wait.” Then the wind started again. It sounded even louder than before. Then I heard an awful cracking noise, and some glass breaking. Then the lights went out and the radio stopped. Mom turned on a flashlight and told us to get under the bed.

Finally, the wind died down. After awhile we went out on the porch. You couldn’t believe it! There were leaves and branches and boards and junk all over the place. The whole tree across the street had fallen down. One branch landed on Mr. Peterson’s garage. Part of the roof was gone from the house next door. An ambulance went by with its siren on. It took a long time before they fixed the electricity so we could watch TV.

What do you think the TV announcer said about the storm?
Hurricanes with Winds of More Than 110 Miles Per Hour, 2001-2005

Cyclone tracks (categories 3, 4, and 5)

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This Robinson Projection shows shapes and relative sizes of land areas fairly accurately. Any map that tries to show the globe on a flat piece of paper is imperfect in some way. This projection distorts distance and direction, especially near the edges.