

1st Place, Junior Poetry
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Our Job

It all starts with a story.
It may shake our view of the world,
Or make us disappointed in ourselves,
For what we've done, but
No matter what,
We can't possibly understand the extent,
We don't see piles of dead people in our dreams,
We don't wake up screaming for mercy.
And we definitely don't know how they feel.
Yet **we** feel outraged anyway.

It's not their story anymore, it's our story,
And our fault. And our job, to make sure
It doesn't happen again.
We can't just pretend that it never happened,
Or change the subject as quickly as possible.
If we do, the future will be condemned.
If we do, people won't remember.
If we do, we might as well send them back.
That's why we won't forget.
We must forever be
Against forgetting.

Even those who weren't even tortured daily,
Those who took it upon themselves to
Be heroes, their stories bring us to tears.
What they had seen, was unforgettable.
They had to choose whether or not to
Show other people the horrors.
But if they hadn't, people would forget.

What would you have done?
Would you have courage like Barraco,
Or would you be too scared to speak up,
Like all the normal men who did awful things?
We have to be prepared, not to be scared,
But to be brave as we always hope we would
Be, should the situation ever arise.
It is brave to listen to the stories.

Once we learn the truth,
We may get nightmares, we may
Feel hopeless, want to somehow
Make it up to them.
But the truth is, it's over,
And it's our job to keep it that way,
Our job to remember,
Our job to fight for them, and for us,
And our job to witness for them.