



2021 Holocaust Remembrance Writing & Art Contest

1st Place:

“Worse Than a Nightmare”

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1. Marching in straight lines.
Holding on to mother's hand.
To the cattle car.
2. At the station, a long line of cattle cars.
We climb in;
I am little so my father lifts me up and into the train.
So many people. So little air.
We are packed together, always touching someone.
I only see people's feet and legs.
I want to lie down, but there is no room.
Sometimes mother or father holds me.
Bars on the window keep us in.
It is hot. I am thirsty. I am scared.
People cry. The train whistle pierces the air.
The wheels grind down the track.
Where are we going?
3. "Men to the left! Women to the right!"
Men with guns yell at us to move.
As if in a dream, everything in slow motion,
My mother and sister march forward as I stay behind.
Why must we separate?
Where are they going?
Perhaps it is just for tonight.
Perhaps in the morning, mother will hug me and
sister and I will run and skip.
But the smoke is black and my heart feels heavy.
4. They shaved our heads,
And gave us small beds.

A number on our wrists,
Now names do not exist.

5. Lots of work and little to eat.
We sleep a bit and then repeat.
There is no time for praying,
And we are all decaying.

6. I am young.
Children like me are usually ordered to death.
My father lied for me so we could stay together.
I had to work extra hard.
If I didn't, I would be sent away.
Away to the children's barrack.
There it was only a matter of time before I would be killed.
That can't happen if I want to make it to liberation.

7. No one is safe here,
Selection is near.
Avoiding selection determines if you survive,
If you pass, you stay alive.
People are hopeful that we will be freed.
But nothing is guaranteed.

8. The child hung there in silence,
Showing no defiance.
He was just like me,
A little kid who wished to be free.
I will never forget that day,
I had witnessed innocence perish away.

9. A vivid picture.
I will always remember
Death, suffering, and loss.

10. The fire, the smoke,
Why have hope?
I am starting to question if this will ever end,
But I will keep trying even if I can't comprehend.
I can't escape from the smell of burning flesh.
Good and bad are starting to mesh.
There are rumors we are being moved somewhere new.
Nobody knows if they are true.

11. I could hear the chatter of my teeth,
And the snow crunching beneath my feet.
We are off to a new place,
Maybe this one will have more space.

12. Some were paralyzed with fear,
Others stood there and shed a tear.
No one knew what lay ahead,
But all were filled with utter dread.
13. Hollow eyes and dirty faces.
Old men stumble and fall.
Laboring from sun up to sun down.
Orphaned; my family lost
Cold to my core.
Alone although surrounded by others.
Uniformed guards are unmerciful.
Starving for a crust of bread.
Tears no longer come.
14. I saw people cry,
I saw people die.
I have been tortured and beat,
And now I accept defeat.
My family is no longer alive,
So why should I be the one to survive?
15. I was once hopeful.
I believed that being patient would work.
That one day I would go home and get to be a kid again.
That life would go back to normal.
Then, I was young and innocent.
Now, I have seen and suffered the unimaginable.
I do not think I will make it to liberation,
I have started to doubt that people are coming to free us.
I don't try to survive anymore.
In fact, I wish I was dead.
16. Fire, smoke, and ashes.
The stench of burning bodies.
Ingrained into me.

17. Destruction of hope.
Humanity is now changed.
Forever tragic.
18. Nothing matters,
Nothing matters at all.
I have no family,
They died in this tragedy.
You could hear the cries,
and you could see the fear in everyone's eyes.
Quickly approaching, was the day of our demise.
It was time to say goodbye.
19. All I could do was pretend,
That this was not the end.
I walked into the flames,
Whispering his name.
And I drew my last breath,
Before my tragic death.
20. Ashes to ashes,
Dust to dust,
Faith is hope,
and hope is lost.