

“Powerless”  
by Madilyn Barbour  
Copley Fairlawn Middle School, Grade 7  
Mrs. Jennifer Adair, Instructor  
Word Count: 824 Words

I stare,  
Into the distance  
With my new journal  
As more and more Nazis  
Storm the street,  
Breaking glass and buildings.  
And Jews  
Cower and hide,  
As their homes and businesses  
Are destroyed.  
My mother crying,  
Hovering over my little sister  
And comforting her.  
As our father  
Is beaten by Nazis  
Just for being Jewish.  
And we watch  
Powerless.

"The ignorance of the broad masses about the inner nature of the Jew, the lack of instinct and narrow-mindedness of our upper classes, make the people an easy victim for this Jewish campaign of lies."

-Hitler

I stare

Into the distance

Yet again.

Writing what I see

To preserve this

As more and more Jews

Are forced into vans,

And other vehicles

Off to camps

Where they will work

To their own demise.

My father

Hiding us in the ghetto house

Whenever Nazis parade

Through the street

Looking for their next kill.

A depressed

Lonely

Powerless

Jew.

"This criminal race has the two million dead of the (First) World War on their conscience, and now hundreds of thousands. Let no one say to me: we cannot send them into the mire. Who

concerns themselves about our men? It is good if preceding us is the terror that we are  
exterminating the Jews."

-Hitler

I stare

Into the distance

Writing poems about the havoc

As more Jews

Are cheated by the Germans

And are thrown into camps

And are thrown into ghettos

That are the same

With the starving children

And the horrid sounds at night

Of screaming

And crying

And gunshots

And cars

Carrying our kind out

To their death

My mother

Mourning our father

Who was recently

Jailed

Just for being a Jew

A lonely

Powerless

Jew

"... The sole German objective in the region will be to liquidate all Jews..."

-Hitler

I stare

Into the distance

Writing in my journal

About what had happened

Crying

For what feels like

The hundredth time

As my sister

Runs in the street

With her friend

Not knowing anything

The sweet bliss

Of joy

And friendship

Not knowing

That her own mother

Shot herself

Last night

Trying to flee  
This feeling of hopelessness  
And dread  
And her older sister  
Trying to save her  
But found it useless  
And buried their mother  
In what little they had of a backyard  
Next to the flowers  
Her mother had planted  
For hope  
And love  
And the flowers her oldest daughter  
Continues to write next to  
Trying to make sense of the havoc  
And violence that is happening  
All around us

"Its final objective must unswervingly be the removal of the Jews altogether."

-Hitler

I stare  
Into the distance  
Crying  
As I remember

My sister  
And her best friend  
Complimenting me  
On how pretty  
And how beautiful  
I was  
In that moment  
As my friend holds my veil  
And I marry  
The man I love  
And how our mother  
Couldn't make it  
Buried two feet  
Into the soil  
Near the dead flowers  
As we tried to escape the ghetto  
And how the Germans  
Shot them up  
My sister  
Sheltering me  
Getting shot  
Her perfect smile  
Framing her last moments  
And I wonder

Would she like the place I chose  
To bury her  
Near our mother  
Near the dead flowers  
As I write next to them about everything  
Telling them  
About the world they had left  
Too soon  
And I am grabbed by the feeling  
Of powerlessness

"If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth and this the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of Jewish race in Europe!"

-Hitler

I stare  
Into the distance,  
Writing my feelings  
Onto a page.  
Writing my experiences  
Onto another page.  
Pages and pages of this life,  
All under a loose piece of floor  
In a small book.



And I stare  
Into the distance  
Not being able  
To experience joy,  
Or excitement,  
Or love.  
Just the feeling  
Of being  
Powerless.

And as years go by, I read to my children entries from my diary,  
About the ghetto, and life in the dark, dark times.  
And the older they get, the more detail I let out  
I tell the stories  
Of feeling powerless  
In hopes they will tell their children, who will tell their children  
So that this horrid event will not repeat itself  
For I fear the day  
Where my descendants will have to face  
The same experiences I did  
And the same fear I felt  
And the same feeling  
Of powerlessness  
For that was not a time of happiness, nor was it a time of celebration

It was a dark time, and I hope  
That no one will have to go through that.  
But if they do,  
I hope they keep a diary, or drawings like I did  
To preserve the events  
And the terror.  
So that it may never  
Ever  
Happens again.

### Works Cited

Bachrach, Susan D. *Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 1994. Accessed 12 January 2023.

“Introduction to the Holocaust: What was the Holocaust? | Holocaust Encyclopedia.”

*Holocaust Encyclopedia*, 5 November 2021,

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-holocaust>.

Accessed 5 February 2023.

Jewish Virtual Library. “Adolf Hitler on the Annihilation of the Jews (September 1919).”

*Jewish Virtual Library*, [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/adolf-hitler-on-the-](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/adolf-hitler-on-the-annihilation-of-the-jews-september-1919)

[annihilation-of-the-jews-september-1919](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/adolf-hitler-on-the-annihilation-of-the-jews-september-1919). Accessed 5 February 2023.

Jewish Virtual Library. “Hitler's Threats Against the Jews (1941-1945).” *Jewish Virtual*

*Library*, [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hitler-s-threats-against-the-jews-1941-](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hitler-s-threats-against-the-jews-1941-1945)

[1945](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hitler-s-threats-against-the-jews-1941-1945). Accessed 4 February 2023.

Klein, Gerda Weissmann. *All But My Life: A Memoir*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.

Accessed 20 January 2023.

“Warsaw Ghetto Uprising | Holocaust Encyclopedia.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*,

[https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1942-1945/warsaw-](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1942-1945/warsaw-ghetto-uprising)  
[ghetto-uprising](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1942-1945/warsaw-ghetto-uprising). Accessed 6 February 2023.

“WWI, its Aftermath, and the Growth of the Nazi Party | Holocaust Encyclopedia.”

*Holocaust Encyclopedia*, [https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-group/holocaust/before-1933)

[group/holocaust/before-1933](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-group/holocaust/before-1933). Accessed 4 February 2023.