

Honorable Mention  
Fiction Writing, Division I  
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*Aish*  
Word Count: 1,000

I hear the loud pants of the oversized crowd that have been brutally shoved into this cattle car. Cattle...that's all we are anymore. After getting round up, being put in a ghetto, and now this...this impending ride, wondering, what's next? Wondering, if we'll live to see the end of this infestation, this Nazi disease.

"We've stopped", Momma whispered. Something felt eerie about this place. Maybe it was the smell, or maybe it was the depression that hit you when you saw the sorrow-filled prisoners staring at us.

Auschwitz.

I squeezed my little brother, Józef's, hand with a deadly grip. I would never let him go.

Soldiers came to our car. They shoved all of us out. Józef started to cry, and Momma tried desperately to silence him. They forced us into a line. We were called up to the gate. I held Józef as close to me as possible.

"I want to go home, Momma," said Józef.

"Shut up! You two go that way," said a short man. He pointed to the left. Momma started walking quick with Józef held tightly in her hand. I followed.

"Hey!" The man yelled at the guards, "Grab that little one!"

"No!" Momma shrieked. She ran away as fast as she could. The soldiers looked at the small man, he nodded at them. *Bang! Bang!*

"Momma!" I yelled.

"Please! Get up. Please." Nothing. A small whimper arose from my throat, in just seconds the whimper turned into a wail and wail into an everlasting sob.

The soldiers forced me along into another line where my head was shaved, I was unclothed and taken into a large shower room.

An old man gave me a large tattoo on my arm.

"Your new name is J44327. That is what you will be called and that is what you will respond to," said the old man. I was given one pair of pajamas and a pair of clogs.

The barracks were roughly forty-five square meters. There were hundreds of people. It was bitterly cold. The feeling in my toes was long gone.

The next morning, I woke to the sound of a gong. We shuffled out of our barrack unwillingly. We stood in a field and listened to a man list off our numbers. The list went on and on. Everyone here was frozen solid, head to toe. The snow was knee deep and harshly blowing in the wind. We all knew what would happen if we moved, so no one did. My legs began to freeze. The man next to me tried to calm me down as I began to fall. He tried catch me but fell to the ground below me a moment later, shot dead. My frantic mind went blank as my face landed on the cold snow, a few inches away from the man who died...for me.

I woke to the sound of Nazi doctors bustling around the infirmary. The infirmary...that's where I was. It was much warmer in here, but there was an overwhelming smell of rotten bodies.

"Hey. He's up," said one of the doctors. Some of them shuffled over to my cot.

"Can you walk?" said another one. I stood up and walked around the full infirmary. My legs wavered slightly but they worked.

"What's your number?"

"J44327," I said looking at my arm.

"You better get back to work, the crematorium is behind." The crematorium is one job that scared me the most.

I was escorted to the area where about forty people worked. The people looked empty, soulless, and dull. They took body after body and stacked them in giant holes until they were full. I was horrified by the way the dead bodies slumped down onto the snowy ground.

"Is this your first day here?" said one of the guards.

"Yes" I answered with a shaky voice.

"This is where you will work. You are going to take one of the bodies from here and drag it onto the conveyer."

The days went on and the hunger worsened. The other people in my barrack stole my clogs and pillow. Eventually, I traded it back for some food. Food...the only thing that any of us really thought about anymore. It was now April. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and somehow laying on this slab of wood early in the morning felt peaceful. Well, that was until the gong rang that signified the beginning of the morning rollcall. Later that day, I was walking over to the crematorium. I started to grab bodies, throwing them onto the conveyer belt. My heart started pounding and pounding. It was the only thing I could hear. I crouched down on the ground and covered my ears. I smelled oranges, all I could smell was oranges and then the next second, I'm on the ground seizing. People came over to me and tried to hold me still, but with no avail. I kept seizing.

"Aah!" I cried as my arm slammed into a metal slab on the ground. Eventually, the seizure faded away but for some strange reason I couldn't feel my arm, no, I couldn't feel anything. I desperately tried to sit up, but my body couldn't move! I tried to cry out for help, but nothing came out!

"I guess he's dead, right?" said one of them.

"What do we do?" said another.

"Let's just leave him here. If he wakes up and comes to the barracks, then we will know if he is alive". They walked away, and now I was alone. A few hours later, a Nazi tripped over my body.

“Ah, these damn Jews, not cleaning up their filth!” He picked me up and dropped me onto the belt.

I felt a burning sensation all over my body. I screamed out in pain.

I could feel myself drifting... unconscious. I squeezed my hand, remembering Josef. The hate that has burned through their veins has now consumed me.

Work Cited Page

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