

## Third Place Division II - Writing

Catherine Vaughn-Thomas, Grade 10

“The View From Anshel’s Window”

Our Lady of the Elms

Elaine Fippin, Instructor

Word Count: 487

-1906- Five Years Old

Ever since he was a little boy,  
Anshel would spend hours  
Gazing out the windowsill  
Like it was his very own watchtower

-1910-

Years passed and Anshel kept on gazing,  
for he’d always liked observing  
But as he grew and paid more attention  
The views grew more disturbing

The first time he felt true fear, the sight burned in his head

He was gazing out the window on a stormy night,

Though he was meant to be in bed.

He shook as raindrops pounded the roof, and winds whipped through the trees

For a while he told none of this fear,

For he knew his siblings would tease.

-1914-

Anshel loved to go to work with Pa,  
To help polish shoes until they shone.  
As he got older he vowed to one day  
have a shop window of his very own.

-1933-

Reading the morning paper, giving his coffee a blow  
Anshel sits behind the counter waiting, business has been slow  
Silence leads to bouts of thought, and slowly mulling over,  
‘Why are they important? Why are we the leftovers?’  
Turned away from the grocer, encouraged not to speak  
Anshel begins to wonder, has life always been so bleak?

-1933-

Anshel’s father died in May, at only fifty-four years old.  
And although it was a tragedy,  
Anshel was glad his Pa didn’t have to see  
The efforts to Aryanize his son’s shop window.

-1934-

Since those young men came to hang up signs  
Wearing green suits and matching chapeaus,  
Hours pass, people scoff and walk  
Right past Anshel's window.

-1938-

As of late questions had been rising,  
"To what journey did the Fuhrer wish to embark?"  
And without any warning, following a cold November morning,  
Anshel watched the night turn exceptionally dark.

-11:47 p.m-

Anshel thought about the first time a window scared him,  
When he was just a boy and feared the thunder clouds.  
He thought it ironic now, that a window was  
the only thing separating him from angry crowds

-1:34 a.m-

As men were rounded by the dozens  
Lined like cattle in a row  
Never was such a horrific sight,  
The view from Anshel's window.

-1952-

Anshel didn’t die that day, though he was never able to walk the same,  
enduring a foot infection from a piece of broken glass.  
Sure, he “survived” despite the ever present pain,  
But how can one ever really live, after such a past?

-2025-

Words cannot begin to describe  
the chaos that took place in those few hours.  
Twenty thousand arrests, nearly two-hundred synagogues met with flames,  
And yet, even today there are Holocaust doubters.  
  
We know it as “The Night of Broken Glass”  
But it was truly a night of breaking spirits  
We can call it tragic, and evil, and incredibly sad  
But we’ll never know what it was like to be there, to bear witness, to hear it.

Works Cited

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