

Honorable Mention Division I – Writing

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People of Today

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People of Today

It is raining and the people are tired
Tired of trying to forget
'It never happened', they say
They're tired of hearing about it
So they deny
And as the rain falls, so do their faces
And the people are tired

It is snowing now, and the people are cold
White crystals fall from the sky
The snow fills extra space around the people and I trap them with my words
So they cannot leave
The phrases we recite
The stories we teach
The memories we recall
Send freezing shivers down their spines
And the people are cold

They are the people of today that we need to carry on our stories
So this doesn't happen again
But all they say is, 'I know, I know, I know'
Which couldn't be true
Because if they did know, they would stay and listen
But they push me away and turn their faces

And now it is sunny and the people are distracted
So they look to the Sun
They look to the ground
They look away and plug their ears and shake their heads
But I don't stop, I talk and I am louder
So even if they plug their ears and shake their heads, they can still hear me
And let the eleven million people who were victims
Those who suffered shine through and share their stories
But the people are distracted

So I will show them
Eva and Miriam's stories
And the stories of the twins

And I tell them
Estelle's story, of the Girl Who Sang

And found her peace
While the war was raging

I will explain to them the story of Anne Frank
And the rest who did not survive
The ones who suffered, suffered, suffered

I tell them of the abuse that made them unhuman
Skinny, sickly, dying
Tattooed forever with numbers
For that was all they were; skin and bones and ink

I will tell of the chalky, contaminated water they were forced to drink
Of the bits of bread expected to last a day
And of the man, the horrible man
And the Nazis, who blindly followed him

I will tell of the gunshots
That rang through the homes, through the buildings, the cells
The barbed wire, the confined walls
With ten men on one bed
Where children were separated from their families
Where people were sent to gas chambers
Which held long, painful deaths
And the death walks
The marches where, if you dared to hesitate, you were killed
And the elderly who walked with the children and the adults
People of all kinds, one moment alive, one moment dead

I will tell them of the revolts in those camps, where people rose up
Brave people who denied evil
And Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass
Where shops were destroyed and people were taken away
Houses taken hostage, broken into
Where shards of clear, sharp glass filled the streets
The people can feel the glass inside them now
Prying for answers, stabbing and scratching them
Desperately trying to escape the closed-up, confined bodies that host them
I will make the people listen
Because they need to know

And, now hail falls down from the sky
Hard, rocky, cold hail; like bullets, fast
The people shield themselves from the hail

The pieces bounce off their coats, their expensive clothes
Their boots and their umbrellas and hats
And draw blood, dirty, dark blood
And the people break open like eggshells
They are raw now, vulnerable, so I keep talking
But the pain is too much for them, so they run away
And make any excuse they can to leave
To stride away from the truth

They scream at me, 'Stop!', but I will not stop
I will not stop sharing my stories
And I will hold the people as they shiver, in the rain, the cold, and the sun
And whisper to them my secrets, the things they don't want to know
And I will not stop until they stop denying
Because the people who will be our future leaders, our future generations
These people of today
They need to know

Works Cited

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