

Honorable Mention

Division I – Writing

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March

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I am the boots on the feet of a Jew during one of the many death marches of World War II. I cling to the feet of the poor, exhausted, freezing young woman, my leather the only barrier between her feet and the freezing ground below. The Nazis do not see her as human, but I do. I feel her dreadful steps, her staggers and stumbles. I see what horrible, horrible things can happen to innocent people undeserving of this degree of pain and suffering. I hear the cries of children, crying for the voices of their parents they may never see again. I see the strong growing weak, the weak growing silent.

I see everything.

I see inhumane creatures with empty faces, acting like nothing is wrong, killing thousands of people in cold blood as if it is something so normal, something simple.

But it will never be simple.

Through the hardship, I see something that the Nazis can never destroy. I see that, despite everything, the strong keep pushing, keep inspiring, and keep holding hands with one another, telling each other that everything will be okay. I see the people who refuse to surrender to these monsters, who stand strong in times of fear. I see the faces of the brave.

I march.

The number of people thins every passing day. Just a single week ago, thousands of men and women; life, surrounded us. Now, it feels as if Earth is barren with those who can only endure the horrible conditions and lost hope of the world. The only people here are the ones who fight, who tell themselves the same two words over and over again: keep going.

Keep waiting for the end that may never even come.

I march.

I march to the place of what feels like inevitable death, for there is no destination. The goal of the Nazis is not arrival, but the collapse of the people who cannot go on. They want a whole population of people dead because of an opinion, because of fear and hate. But the brave will not let that happen.

So I march, and march, and march.

I hug the feet of the girl who will not give up, who has the look of determination on her face, despite all of the pain. I hug the feet of resistance in human form.

Resistance is what people need in these horrible times.

Resistance led this young woman to keep marching, to try to survive.

The brave walk so that maybe they will return home. Maybe, they can see the faces of the people they love once more.

The unknown awaits. This war may end soon; perhaps it may not. Time can only tell.

Until then, I march

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