

2025 Elie Wiesel Competition

2nd Place Junior Poetry

Liia Reyes, 8th Grade

Kyrene Centennial Middle School, Debra Rosenblum

January 27th

Stories and fairytales of distant lands always have a way of taking us to someplace else
Somewhere we've never been, and somewhere we'll likely never go
Seeing the eyes of a character that we'll never get to be
Feeling like a brave and noble hero that we'll never be seen as by others

Pulled into another world, colors bright but foggy
Seeing what they see, while my mind is a bit groggy
Prisoner A-7713
Prison bars, cold cement, the clang of gates closing
Over and over again
Arbeit Macht frei - 'Work makes you free'
Will nothing these people do bring justice to their country?

I trace my fingers over the different symbols in Auschwitz-Birkenau
Pink triangles for homosexuals, yellow for Jewish prisoners
Black for asocials, red for political prisoners
Green for criminals, and purple for Jehovah's witnesses
The nazis were beyond cruel and inhumane
I'm obligated to keep the name
humble in all lowercase

You'll never truly understand the meaning of Genocide, until you see it yourself
Some will tell me;

This is not your story to write poems about

Not your relatives killed, imprisoned, taken, and tortured

And i'll tell them they're right, and walk home alone that day

I stared up at my ceiling wondering; Why?
I recalled him saying "To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."
I took this reference, and got up from my bed to try to make something
That would benefit this day of remembrance, like he who lived to bear witness
And It started something like this;
Stories and fairytales of distant lands always have a way of taking us to someplace else

Best regards to the hearts left broken like broken shards