

There I was isolated from my childhood. Why is freedom so close but far? I questioned myself. I made a decision to not hate. As I was always curious about what was happening to the rest of the city.

Blackness in the Ghetto. Having fear everywhere I go. I notice I can die any second. I felt powerless. Everyone did. It was like that every day – just blackness.

Death personified me. It haunted me. As I saw the ones I loved die. Remembering every story and what they left with me. The shadows fed my haunting. As fear strangled me, as I tried gasping for air. For the fragments of a life left.

Years whispered by. Only reflections remained – pieces of themselves that they had left behind. An empty loss always. An absent supporter in the stands. Only glimpses in my memory.

### **Aayan**

The moment he went to the concentration camp haunted him, where he felt pain that he would never forget, life irreversibly altered. He forgot the taste of happiness, instead he was given the bitter pain of torture. He felt trapped and caged behind this barrier separating him from the freedom to live life. The terror had become the architect of a city he had once called home.

Anxiety breathed through the ghetto, the ever-present feeling that his family was in danger. Depression soaked their life there. Dim and dreadful. Fences surrounded him – containing their exhaustion. We felt bound, unable to do anything, shepherded into helplessness.

Wherever he went death followed him like a shadow, snatching his loved ones away – one by one. Every day the darkness grew and lured more people into the dusk of death. His dad was one of the victims. His dad got caught. Shot. Eternal sleep now. He defied the Germans by smuggling flour. His dad died for his family, he could not see them suffer. His dad's bravery emboldened him, filled him with a fire. A strength they couldn't take. He would become the architect of his own life.

### **Aditi**

As Ben entered the ghetto for the first time in his hometown (Piotrków), he could hear the screams and cries of people getting separated from their families. He stood there in horror as he saw many Jews getting pushed and shoved.

Ben felt concerned and worried for the other people in the ghetto. He saw the fences surrounding him making him feel trapped and alone – even though he was surrounded by over 25,000 other Jews.

After he was separated from his father, death circulated him like a shadow in the summer. Tiny shivers flew from his face to his feet like little race cars. All of a sudden, he saw his mother, longing to see her again even though he knew he wouldn't.

He was not prepared for the gunshots and screams Ben was going to hear during his years in the ghetto until this war ends...For good.

### **Alicja**

At the opening, the crowd roared

It was the 1956 Olympic opening

Excitement soured.

The stadium was massive

Everyone was rushing and pushing

Hope was passive

Excitement overwhelms him and fills him with pride

Everyone was being pushed aside

Because they all wanted to get inside

But then he remembered

The times when he wasn't free like this

His pride disassembled

The times of the Holocaust

He was an evil man, the one behind it,

Sins like that are going to cost.

**Michael**

### Sir Ben Helfgott's Childhood

It's the 1930's. Birds are singing, children laughing and church bells ringing. A little polish Jew called

'Ben Helfgott' playing at his local park, swinging on a swing whilst his parents push him. His mother

Singing 'I love capri' whilst she pushes him in a little place called 'Piotrkow'...

The time is 4:30 in the afternoon on a beautiful a and sunny day. Ben Helfgott is sitting with his family and listening to the radio, all of a sudden they heard a polish announcement "Hello, Hello! Can you hear us? We are broadcasting the last Polish radio communication. Today, German troops entered Warsaw. We send brotherly greetings for Polish soldiers fighting at hel peninsula, and anybody fighting whatsoever, regardless of the place. Poland is Not Yet lost! Long Live Poland" they were scared and terrified of the future of Poland and them... Ben's parents bolted up and started preparing for Hitler's 'Nuremburg laws'.

Ben's mind started spinning uncontrollably, freaking him out, forcing him to think about how he can die. He just thought of the Germans' rapidly incoming for Piotrkow. He was horrified just thinking of the fact that the Germans are most likely already half way there to Piotrkow.

As the day came closer his heart began beating faster, faster than a leopard, faster than the German army heading for Piotrkow. It's the middle of the night, Ben has bolted up upright feeling the puddle of sweat drenching him. It's the morning and ben can feel the fast footsteps and the tank tracks of the Germany army incoming.

**Oskar**

I opened my eyes, at least I think I did? Blackness surrounded me, haunting me. I blink, turning around.

Silence.

I listened closely, I heard some noises coming from outside. Where was I again? My stomach growled. I longed for food. I glanced around, more people finally rose from their 'beds' and started whispering to each other. The noise slowly rose in the building and everyone slowly started to move around. I hid under my covers. I longed to stay in bed just a bit longer.

I opened my eyes. I was there again. At least I think I was? Blackness surrounded me, haunting me.

I blinked. I returned.

Silence. All around me. Turning around. Again. The whispers slowly rose.

I opened my eyes. Blackness surrounded me.

Then silence.

**Zuzanna**