

SECOND PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY

Because of You

Charlotte Morrison, Grade 8

Holy Family Catholic School, Orange, CA

Teacher: Staci Trout

Survivor Testimony: Rose Kohn

I've witnessed many things in life
I carried the memory of a hardworking father coming home after a long day
a mother whose delicate hands stitched the clothes of babes
A tiny home filled to the brim with love
All through these eyes
There was a school for Poles, and one for Jews
I knew where I belonged, I found where I fit
The Nazis displaced me; I was not meant for the ghettos
My graceful mother turned fragile
My hardworking father turned frail
They transformed bakers, friends, and neighbors into still bodies gently swaying in the wind
The marching echoing in the streets like the fearful beating of my heart
I kept my fear close, to keep me safe
Soon the Nazis took that too
Hunger gnawed at my stomach and I withered away
All through these eyes
My mother withered too. She no longer smiled or showed me love.
But still, "it was just me and my mother."
I clung to her, for she was a part of me, and without her I couldn't go on
Even at my weakest, I managed to carry her sickly body, not on my shoulders, but in my heart
she was at the end of her rope so I gave her mine
She was the engine that kept me going, sometimes she would break down, but I always knew my
love could fix her
I only carry my memories for they are all I have left
no belongings, no comforts, just the searing pain of loss and the resilience to carry on
All through these eyes
I now understand that all you can carry are the memories of things you have loved and lost.
No tangible thing could ever fill my soul
I will carry the resilience that empowered her and the tremendous strength it took to keep going
Her journey and experiences will never be forgotten.
All through my eyes