

*Goodbye*  
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Survivor Testimony: Selene Bruk

*She told her story, shared her memories, so that we will know  
So that we will be messengers for others*

In fifth grade, I lost tomorrow.  
I had only my mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, and brother.  
The Nazis came to take us to the ghettos.  
Goodbye Home, you were taken from me.  
Men herded toward death, only realizing their fate as they stood, eaten alive by  
The flames.  
They took my grandfather to make an example of him.  
Goodbye Grandfather, you were taken from me.  
We hid in an attic and the cries of a child nearly ruined us.  
He had to be silenced.  
Goodbye Innocence, you were taken from me.  
We ran in the streets, avoiding death. All except one.  
I saw an angel die as that bullet destroyed yet another beautiful life.  
Goodbye Grandmother, you were taken from me.  
Standing naked, I lost my hair and clothes.  
I was pointed at, ridiculed, as I stood bare against the light of God.  
Goodbye dignity, you were taken from me.  
Screams of a madwoman filled my ears. She would call for me, "Selene! Selene! Come!"  
She fell to the floor and I held her in my arms. Eventually, she left me, too.  
Goodbye Auntie, you were taken from me.  
I thought the war was over, but the Russians came for me.  
I hid, forever forgetting the feeling of safety.  
Goodbye Hope, you were taken from me.  
The war was over and I finally learned to ignore the pain the past brought me.  
But I had to return.  
As I stood in my old home, I remembered the happiness and joy of my past.  
Remembering my childhood and my family brought tears to my eyes.  
My daughter said the streets of Poland were beautiful.  
But I remembered the Jewish blood that was spilled there.  
So I told her that she should never learn to love it.  
She was the first to know my message: the message I carried for years.  
How I lived.  
What I knew.

*We can be Selene's messengers  
Carry her story of pain, of loss, and of tears.  
So that all the things that were taken from her  
Will never be taken from anyone else, ever again.*