

"The Voice"
Ethan Shill, Grade 9
Tarbut V'Torah Community Day School, Irvine, CA
Teacher: Leslie White
Survivor: Paula Lebovics

I am the red stains seeping into the crisp white snow
That tells a tale of foreboding horror
Just outside the Ostrowiec ghetto
I am witness to swift, merciless killings
For the weak, frail and old that can serve no purpose
And this is just the beginning

I am the shiny, metallic barrel of a gun pointed at the back of your head
In the hands of a Ukrainian soldier
Who thinks you are better off dead
As fate would have it you did not meet your doom
By a soldier's words "don't waste the bullet now, she'll be dead soon"

I am the clanking of the Nazi officer's boots
That send a chill through your body on a hot summer's day
They keep you as hostages in their fancy suits
While you stand naked on a platform and pray

I am the thick smoke billowing from the tower in view
That burns a constant orange flame
The stench of death that envelopes your body like thick glue
Where is G-d? Life is not a game!

I am the voice of a young girl singing Kol Nidre
A silvery sound echoing throughout the barracks
That helped you get more bread and eased your stay
A touch of joy mixed with abundant sorrow
A song for a hope of a new tomorrow

I am your memories, Paula, a reflective recollection
The surreal experience of a childhood that was stolen
There is not a specific one that define you, rather a collection
You kept silent for so many years for fear of retribution
But courage prevailed, you found the words to speak against the "final solution" That little girl's
voice that stood alone and proud
Is now an orchestra, a deafening crowd
We all sing out against hatred and oppression
For if we don't seek love, it will be our nation's regression.