

I Have Lost My Rose-Tinted Glasses
Jamie Serin Doo, Grade 11
Palos Verdes High School, Palos Verdes Estates, CA
Teacher: Cynthia Ruiz
Survivor Testimony: Ludmila Page

When I hid behind my utopian, rose-colored lenses,
I could not fully fathom Ludmila's story,
But now those spectacles
have fallen apart at my feet.
But shall I lose hope in love, goodness, and compassion?
Shall the numerous lives who were killed be defined only by the hatred of their aggressors? Shall
we look at the Jewish people with pitying eyes as being part of antiquity?
Shall we stand by and let history be slowly forgotten?
Shall I cower behind the broken spectacles of my flawed perception?
But, dear Ludmila reminds me,
as I stand on the glass shards of my lost ignorance,
her memory, in Brunnlitz-
I see within her eyes, in the halls of the sanctuary-like factory,
The small rations of margarine, and jars of beet jam, perhaps
As a skilled soul created a big, big birthday cake,
How another took a golden tooth
And formed a ring of connection, of unity,
Of trust in human dignity.
In the midst of youth, my teenage eyes have become clouded with cynicism,
I have stepped on the lost bones of the yesteryears,
But if Ludmila's living story shall die in my shaking hands,
I have now realized,
That for every Jewish soul I forget,
and leave behind,
I leave behind a member of humanity
I leave behind another mother, another daughter, another spouse,
Another individual to the unforgiving hands of time.
But, dear Ludmila reminds me,
as I sweep away the glass shards of my ignorance,
her memory, of a single, bright light,
perhaps stained with the ashes of luxury and womanizing,
but was a beacon of human decency in darkness,
the golden ring engraved with the phrase
"One who saves one Jewish soul, saves the whole world."
For once, in the midst of youth,
I have found
My eyes wide open towards the unwavering truth Ludmila revealed to me
And I have never been the same.