

High School Poetry
First Place

Zoete Eeuwige Hoop (Sweet Hope Eternal)

Natalie Beisner, Grade 11

Mater Dei, Santa Ana

(In honor of Silvia Grohs-Martin and the many who never lost hope)

The world is silent – In a corner far removed from civilization, long forsaken by hope is a Hell
In this place there are no names – only numbers
And screams of terror and anguish are the language of the day
The dawn of the new year 1944 does not bring joy to these forgotten children of Eden
Tears stream from hollow eyes in Block 27
But – Hark! – Smiles break through the tears and laughter trickles through the stale air
Before them is a woman – she looks just like the rest –
Head nearly bald, body long broken, with the devil’s calling card etched upon her arm
Was it so long ago that you were at the peak of your fame?
Silvia Grohs – stunning red hair, voice of a nightingale, legend of the famous Schouwburg stage
Where you sang to the Jews when the rest of the world turned them away
And they applauded and showered you with Heaven’s petals – enough to fill all of Amsterdam
Now – less than one year later – as she sings with all her strength for these captives of Hell
A light glows in her eyes and the air above her chants, “She is a survivor”
And the women before her whisper, “She is a hero,” for she has given them the gift of forgetting –
Her notes dance on a breeze that blankets the faces of the ones they loved and lost - the ones who
shrieked for blessed mercy and found none – the children who cried crimson tears upon their
mothers’ breasts – on this night these women dance on an earth that tastes not of salt, but of Hope
For a moment, they are free as welted hands join together to shatter the nations’ silent disbelief
Has applause every sounded so sweet, Silvie?

Weary hands in the kitchens preparing a meager meal – a feast for those who know hunger...
My heart longing to do more before the day is done – for I know the hunger is not yet gone...
The plea in these children’s eyes overwhelms... I take a small frail body up in my arms
“May I have this dance?” He nods and – O! – Blessed smile!... Soon a million tiny feet tap the
floor... Children’s laughter floats in the air... Never was heard a sweeter symphony.

Hope is never lost... People only misplace it... Heroes are those who bring it back to us... I know of one
who chose to sing when she was told to be silent, who danced so that others would not fall;
a woman – and angel –
Head nearly bald, body long broken, with the devil’s calling card etched upon her arm
Silvie, you were never more beautiful than you are in this moment... This is your crowning glory.

- *Zoete Eeuwige Hoop* means *Sweet Hope Eternal*. It is Dutch, Silvia’s native language.