

**Middle School Poetry
First Place**

Without Regret
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Desperate Jews pounded at embassy gates,
Last hope for escape.
He was their sole consolation
Last chance for salvation.

But permission to grant visas was denied.
Sempo Sugihara had to decide.
Defy his country and risk going home a disgrace,
Or let human life go to waste.

If he made saving them his mission
Would he later regret his decision?

As death rapidly accrued
He couldn't watch the torture continue.
Human beings who needed help, his conscience they did prod.
He may have to disobey his government, but he wouldn't disobey God.

His moral compass guiding the way
Writing nearly three hundred visas a day,
Not stopping until the train left the station
Further demonstrating his determined dedication.

He lost his job and his reputation
But never regretted his decision.

Courageous enough to violate Japanese policy
With reasons based on moral philosophy.
He made saving them his mission
And never once regretted his decision.

There isn't a day I don't regret a decision I now disdain
When I deliberately caused my friend scarring, emotional pain.
I have learned from that choice, and through much forgiving
Now, before speaking, do a great deal of considering.

His actions taught a lesson we must never forget:
Don't make decisions you are going to regret.