

untitled

*a poem for two voices*

we used to live in a beautiful brick house with a shiny iron gate

we used to live in a cramped townhouse with many stairs

my family used to spend every sabbath together

my family used to live off of meager portions of anything

we weren't picky

all that matters was that it wasn't expensive

i used to have piano lessons every tuesday after school

i used to dream of one day being able to play the violin

but that was before the *führer*

once germany greeted him, there was no more school

no more report cards to make mama proud

mother came up to me last night before bed

“you’re doing so well in school.” she smiled.

“i’m proud of you.”

papa lost his bakery to the *führer's* soldiers

my brother just told us he bought a new business

a bakery

some of the men who took away papa's business showed up at our door one day

the nerve of them

father burst into the kitchen one day with a smile on his face

then they told us the bad news

and then he told us the good news

we were moving

they told us we were being relocated to something called a ghetto

*führer's* orders

a gift from the *führer*, he called it

i couldn't believe my ears

our neighbors had warned us about the ghettos

they simply referred to it as

hell on earth

father showed me a picture of our new house

it was a lovely brick house with a gleaming iron gate

we carried our belongings for miles in order to arrive at our new home

father packed our belongings into our car and we drove off to our new house

the ghetto was small and cramped

i don't like it here, i thought.

this can't possibly get worse

this can't possibly get better

i was wrong

after a just few weeks in the ghetto

my family was split up

after moving into our new house

father took us on a vacation

my mother, sister, and i were forced onto a train

into cattle cars

like animals

we traveled to poland by train

in a beautiful train car

with velvet seats and gold accents

the trip took days

within a few hours

we arrived

i was starving when i got off the train

my lips were dry and cracked

i almost fell on the dusty path when we arrived

my legs were aching from standing

i was stuffed from the meal mother brought for me on the train

i pressed a kiss to her cheeks in thanks

however, i almost fell over when i kissed her

my legs were slightly numb from sitting for so long

i looked around the crowd of people for papa

my brothers

but i didn't find any of them

i didn't know that i'd never see them again

father leads us to a group of people gathered down the street

they all have nazi flags

nazi officers point at us and tell my mother and me to keep walking

"head towards that building"

they yell

i'm confused as to what is going to happen

but then it hits me

i'm going to die

i'm going to see *die führer*

the officers tell us to put our belongings against a wall

"remember the place"

they remind us

the weather is warm  
a perfect day for a perfect event  
my hands are clasped  
my body is shaking with excitement

the weather is dreary  
it's pouring rain  
my hands are blue  
my body is shaking

then i see it

the gas chambers

his car

i hear the motor put

put

puttering along

i hear the slam of the door

and then the sound of vents opening

my mother squeals with excitement

my mother collapses

i see his face in the distance

*die führer*

i see all the colors

red

white

black

they're all flashing

so fast

eventually

i collapse too

i start cheering

i've never felt more helpless

i've never felt more alive

in my final moments

of life

of seeing him

i hear a guard yell out

i yell out

*heil Hitler*