

Remi Frederick, A Letter of Life, Grade 8 (Columbia Jr. High – Federal Way)

Dear Unnamed Soldier,

I hope this letter reaches you. You probably don't remember me, I was that little girl you rescued from Treblinka all those years ago. I was standing at the front gates as you and your comrades marched through, triumphant and gleeful. You stopped short as you saw our faces. I probably didn't look my fifteen years, so small from malnourishment to look only eight or nine, but my eyes that had seen so much, they looked ancient.

I was afraid and excited to even think that we might be free. There were only about sixty of us left. The rest had been gassed and burned, their ashes scattered all around the camp, leaving us to inhale them and choke on them.

When you hide from the Nazis, everyday is a day of fear. You wonder if this is the day you will be caught. You must be silent at every moment. There is little food. The family that graciously let us hide in their house gave us books and candles but still it was tedious. Everything posed a risk. Even the lit candles, if we put them in the wrong place they could catch other things on fire and that would alert the Nazis immediately to our presence. One day we were discovered. It was one of the scariest moments of my life. I never found out what happened to the family that hid us, the Nazis took them away also and we never saw them again.

I was transferred from Dachau to Treblinka and was given the job to cut my fellow prisoners' hair before they were gassed. If I gave any mention that they were about to be murdered, I would be shot. I was to tell the prisoners that they were going to take a shower. The hair of the dead were turned into felt for the SS Soldiers' boot liners.

You stopped in front of me with a blanket and some bread in your hands. I took them, wrapped my skeletal frame with the blanket and started nibbling on the delicacy. After the moldy, lice covered bread and the watery soup that I got everyday, it tasted like the finest meal in the world. You rescued me, dear Soldier. You saved me from certain death. You saw me and then lead me to the freedom I had not dared to dream of for over three years.

Toda, raba

Dr. Shifra Leichter