

To Burn 1

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10th Grade

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In those days,
there were no stars but holes in the sky opening to our eventual fate.
i was not a body or a stomach or a victim
but empty space in a world that never wanted me.
How deprived those days were,
and i.
How deep the grave had to have been
to bury a people in it.
And You,
i had for so long dreamed of a beating heart
to be seen through the holes in the fence.
Many men before had passed, had entered,
none with any discernible humanity.
The severity of my nakedness in that moment,
as if I were translucent in the sun,
at least that would explain why the world had treated us invisible.
And in that moment,
the luxury it would have felt to disappear.
"I am also a Jew"
Silence.
"I am also a Jew, and as the reality of this place did seize me,
how Jewish am i to have left you here for so long."

And in that moment,
the luxury it would have been to cry.
The love I have had for you,
and now,
the tears.

Walking to your camp in those days,
I remember nothing above me but clouds.
I do not think I believed then,
or now,
that this world could have been protected by anything other
than that thin layer of vapor,
made up of all that was never given to you.
Your song was weak but held onto by a strand of faith
that I myself could never have mustered.
When I left my homeland, never did I know
the size of the horrors I was running from.
Still, the memory of my mother's candles against my skin,
the warmth,
my father's gravel-rough prayer,
still it aches my heart for you,
so many years past.

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Grateful soul,
lips against mossy boot
upon the first meeting and tears upon the reunion,
your heart has seen the flames extinguished
and has chosen never to stop burning.

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