

SECOND PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY

A Camp Sister's Spirit

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I don't know how she did it:

Learn to paint pictures of the past when the present rubbed her raw

If only it had been a ghost that shattered the glass

An illusion, a fable that could be soothed back to sleep with a few choice words

Much worse was the hatred,

The way backs break under the pressure of it—

Under the pressure of a brother's body

Under the pressure of a pained mind, a blank canvas to fill with memories

I don't know how she did it:

Find friendship so deep in a place so foul and full of fear

First came the brutality and then the betrayal,

Her own country turned its back

In cattle cars and camps, smothering, crying, starving, dying

Weakened and aching, she found a light

A group of girls to share the weight of what could have been

I don't know how she did it:

Hold their faces in her hands and whisper in their ears songs of hope

In straight lines they stood, awaiting their fate

Upholding a promise they made;

To always stand together and face the pain

Above the deadly hatred they rose

Like a rain cloud in the driest drought,

The camp sisters replenished each other's hope

I don't know how she did it:

Discover all the secrets of a sturdy spirit in a simple pact

It didn't end poetically; it didn't end at all, with endless haunted dreams

But even through threats of death, their bond could not be blackened

Through it all, a pact of loyalty, strength, peace

And in her ears the words of a sister rings,

“We have to survive and tell the world what has happened...”