

First Prize Poetry, Middle School Division

*Stones*

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We lived in Narewka, the world was quiet and calm

Children playing on the street corner

Run as fast as you can

And toss a carefree stone.

In Krakow the Nazis came to take us away, tearing us from our home

Hurting the people we loved, destroying our childhoods

Let go

And throw a worthless stone.

Forced into ghetto gates draped in barbed wire, our holding pen before death

Walls surround us, contain us

Spin around

And hurl a violent stone.

Smoke from the imposing chimneys curls like a cat's tail, covering the sky

We are emaciated, ensnared, empty

Raise your arms

And cast a frightful stone.

We ask for and received a savior named Schindler who kept us alive

A great kindness in a mad world

Bow your head

And cast a tranquil stone.

The gates with their rusting silver teeth fell and out we flew, scavenging for food

With a last burst of strength, take a deep breath

And cast a desperate stone.

Saved, rescued, emancipated and free

Walk past his grave

And place a final stone.