

## Kríník in Khurbn

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*Minsk. Old postcard courtesy of Tomek Wisniewski*

Der veg vert mit yedn trot shverer un gefערlekher. ober mir shteln zikh nisht op far keyn zakh. di fis shlepn aroptsu. s'vilt zikh leygn in blote un khotsh a minut zikh opruen.

-Foroys! shrayt der leytenant un zayne oygn glantsn vi bay a vilder kats, vos loyft khapn a moyz, oder vos antloyft fun a beyzn hunt. eyner halt zikh in tsveytn. mir viln zikh nisht farlirn in der nakht-fintsternish. ot dakht zikh undz, az mir zeen in der vaytkeyt fun der nakht a vald mit hoykh groz, vu mir veln zikh kenen aropzetsn, ober mir vern antoysht ven mir kumen tsu tsum ort, vos mir hobn ongetsaykhnet az dos iz dos vald. s'iz nor a fray feld.

tsvey khaveyrim fun di hintershte vern shvakh un kenen vayter nisht geyn un oyf vos zikh tsu zetsn opruen iz oykh nishto keyn trukn shtikl erd. di gefar iz groys, vayl mir zaynen nit zikher, ver es vet plutslung aroyskumen fun der fintsterkeyt. tsvey shtarke khaveyrim nehmen di shvakhere oyf di akslen un geyen mit zey biz zey vern aley n shtark mid un muzn ibergeb n di andere.

lozn a khaver in der fintsterer nakht aley n in a zumpikn feld- dos veln mir nisht ton. mir hobn geshlosn a khaverishe ibergeb nkeyt un veln dos haltn biz mir veln zikh dershlogn tsum tsil.

The path becomes heavier and more dangerous with every step, but we don't stop for anything. Our feet pull us down, we would love to lie in the mud and rest for a minute!

"Ahead," cries the lieutenant, and his eyes gleam like those of a wild cat that is just on the prowl for mice, or else fleeing from a vicious dog. We hold on to each other because we don't want to lose anyone in the gloom of the night. Just now, we think that in the vastness of the night we saw a forest with tall grass where we could sit down, but when we get there, we are disappointed: what we had marked as "forest" is just an open field.

Two of the rearmost comrades become limp and can go no further. But there is not a single piece of dry earth where they could rest and sit down. It is very dangerous, because we are not sure who could suddenly come out of the darkness. Two strong comrades take the weaker ones on their shoulders and walk with them until they themselves get too tired and have to surrender both of them to others.

We don't want to leave any comrade alone in the dark night in the swampy terrain! After all, we promised each other mutual devotion, and we intend to keep that until we've made our way to our destination.

<p>der himl iz shvarts. es finklen di shtern un vayzn undz dem veg. di shayn fun der halber levone dergreykht tsu undz, git undz likht in fintstern arum.</p> <p>a groyser pas vayzt in vinkl oyfn rand himl un vakst shnel oyf, in der leng un brayt fun shvartsn arum. di finklendike shtern leshn zikh langzam oys un lozn oyf zeyer plats shtiklekh tunkl-groye flekn.</p> <p>a kil vintl flit farbay un nemt adurkh di nase, farshvitste beyner. yeder geyt itst shtum. keyner redt nisht eyner tsum tsveytn, vi do voltn gegangen ingantsn vild-fremde mentshn. yeder iz tif farton in zayne gedanken, in zayne</p>	<p>The sky is black. The stars twinkle and show us the way. The glow of the crescent moon shines on us and gives us light in the dark surroundings.</p> <p>In one corner at the edge of the sky, a large streak appears, growing rapidly in length and width into the surrounding black. The twinkling stars slowly go out, leaving dark gray patches in their place.</p> <p>A cool breeze blows by and penetrates our wet, sweaty bones. Everyone walks silently, no one speaks to the other, even as if there were complete strangers walking. Everyone is deeply immersed in his thoughts and</p>	
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<p>fantazyes, vos moln im di shenste dergreykhung-feste erd unter di fis.</p> <p>mir hern vider a shtiln geroysh fun avyonen, velkhe dertrogt zikh tsu undz alts nenter un nenter un ot zeen mir shoyn in di tife, farneplte volkns gantse tshates fliendike feygl fun shtol, vos firn mit zikh far gezunte, fridlekhe mentshn-toyt anshtot broyt.</p> <p>-shneler, foroys, foroys! mir muzn zikh farbahalt, zey veln undz bamerkn und dan veln zey undz bashisn mit mashin-gever, shrayt der leytnant un bavegt mit di hent, untershtupndik a yedn, az er zol geyn shneler. di opgeshtanene</p>	<p>fantasies, which paint us the most beautiful achievements - solid earth under our feet!</p> <p>We hear again a soft sound of airplanes, which comes closer and closer, and now, we already see in the deep, foggy clouds whole flocks of flying steel birds, which carry a <b>special</b> charge for healthy, peaceful people: death, instead of bread!</p> <p>"Faster, ahead, ahead! We have to hide, they will notice us and machine-gun us," the lieutenant yells, waving with his hands and nudging everyone to go faster.</p>	
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<p>khaveyrim hobn shoyn ongehoynb tsu geyn aley n mir hobn ale zikh genumen shteln lange, gikhe tritn.</p> <p>ober oysmaydn di avyonen iz undz umeglekh, un der leytenant git undz a bafel, az mir zoln zikh oysleygn oyfn nasn, blotikn groz, vayl di avyonen zaynen shoyn leben undz. zey flien in der groykeyt eyne leben tsveytn, dreyst un shtolts, vi es volt shoyn geven zeyer erd.</p> <p>zey flien zeyer shver balodn. bald veln zey oysshpayen shtiker ayzn, ongefult mit dinamit un hunderter mentshn veln zayn toyt.</p> <p>-akh, vu iz mayn avyon?-shrayt oys der yingster flier, velkher ligt itst leben mir mit farkritste tsey n di foystn gebeylt, di oygn tif gevendet tsu di fliendike avyonen.</p> <p>der tsveyter ruft zikh op: mir veln nokh bakumen avyonen, dan veln mir azoy aroysflien in di himlen oyfn veg tsu Berlin.</p> <p>der geroysh vert shtiler. mir shteln zikh oyf un a shtrenger bafel kumt fun leytenant:</p> <p>-khaveyrim, shnel foroys! itst iz shoyn likhtik. mir muzn vos gikher aroys fun der zumpiker gegnt. loyt der mape gefinen mir zikh gants noent fun Minsk. do bald darf zayn dos vald. dos groyse alte vald, vos tsit zikh fun Minsk biz Bialystok.</p>	<p>The comrades <b>who had stayed behind had already begun to walk a little apart</b>, but now we all begin to walk in long, quick strides.</p> <p>But it is impossible for us to escape the planes, and the lieutenant gives the order to lie down on the wet, muddy grass, because the planes are already very close to us. They are flying in the gray haze, one next to the other, bold and proud, as if the earth already belonged to them.</p> <p>They are carrying a heavy load. In a moment they will spew out pieces of iron, filled with dynamite - and hundreds of people will be dead.</p> <p>"Oh, where is my plane?" exclaims the youngest pilot, now lying grudgingly next to me, his fists clenched, his eyes fixed far upward at the flying planes.</p> <p>A second one speaks up: "Soon we will get airplanes, and then we will also swarm out like this in the sky towards Berlin!"</p> <p>The sound diminishes. We rise and receive a strict order from the lieutenant:</p> <p>"Comrades, quickly forward! It is already getting light. We have to get out of this swampy area faster! According to the map, we are very close to Minsk, so the forest must be coming soon, that big old forest that stretches from Minsk to Bialystok!"</p>	
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<p>-mir hobn vald!, khaveyrim! shnelere trit, ot ze ikh vald!- shrayt der leytenant, velkher geyt foroys un makht mit der hant tsu di hintershte khaveyrim. zayne oygn zaynen ongefilt mit</p>	<p>"We are meeting forest, comrades! Run faster, there I see forest!" shouts the lieutenant, who goes ahead, waving towards the rearmost comrades.</p>	
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<p>frayd. es shpreyt zikh far undz oys a guter sosne-vald un ot zaynen mir shoyn baym ershtn boym.</p> <p>mir faln glaykh oyf der erd, velkhe iz farshotn mit trukene nodlen un bleter fun shvartse yagde-kustes. akh, vi gut s'iz a bisele tsu lign mit di fis ongeshpart in a boym, dos blut zol zikh tsegeyn ibern gantsn kerper! di fis zaynen heys, un di shpits finger shtekht vi mit nodlen. yeder falt glaykh arayn in a shlof, nit tsurirndik zikh afile frier tsu di torbes.</p> <p>mir hobn zikh oyfgekapt iber a groysn tuml un rash, vos hot zikh geshafn arum undz. der breg vald iz bazetst un baleygt mit roytarmeyer, leytenantn, un hekhere ofitsirn. ale zaynen denervirt, tsetrogn.</p> <p>men zet zeyer fil vos trogn nisht keyn geveer un azelkhe vos trogn tsu tsvey biksn oder oytomatn, balodn mit hant-granatn. mir sheyen oyf. di fis zaynen geshvoln un shver vi dembene kletser (lit.block of oak).</p>	<p>His eyes are full of joy. A large pine forest spreads out in front of us, and now we have already reached the first tree.</p> <p>In a moment we drop to the ground, over which dry needles and leaves of blueberry bushes are poured. Oh, how good it feels to lie down for a bit, legs up in a tree, so that the blood can distribute itself throughout the body again! The feet are hot and the tips of the toes sting as if needles were pricking them. Everyone falls asleep right away, even before the provision bags are brought out.</p> <p>When we wake up, there is great commotion and noise around us. The edge of the forest is occupied and covered by Red Army soldiers, lieutenants and higher officers. Everyone is worried and upset.</p> <p>We see many people without weapons, but others carrying two rifles or machine guns at once while loaded with hand grenades. We stand up. Our legs are swollen and heavy like lead.</p>	
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<p>der leytenant bet zikh bay undz mir zoln onshtrengen ale undzere farborgene koykhes un zikh lozn in veg arayn tsu der shtot Minsk. mir gefinen zikh shoy'n nisht mer vi neyn kilometer fun der shtot.</p> <p>der leytenant bet zikh un helft yedern fun undz zikh oyfshteln mit di verter:-khaveyrim, mir zaynen shoy'n dos erste ibergekumen, nor mit mut un gloybn in undzer zig veln mir alts dergreykhn.</p> <p>mir hobn ongehoyn tsu shteln di ershte trit in veg arayn. vos vayter un tifer mir geyen in vald, alts mer un mer soldatn arum. ver es ligt oyfn groz un shloft a mider un hungeriker, ver es ligt mit fartriknte lipn a farvundeteter un keyner git im nisht keyn sanitare hilf.</p> <p>di distsiplin iz ungantsn farshvundn. soldatn folgen nisht zeyere komandirn, komandirn-zeyere leytenantn un azoy bizn polkovnik.</p> <p>far mir kumt a yunger soldat, velkher geyt ongeshpart oyf der biks. zayne hoyzn zaynen farplekt mit blut un tserisn. dos gezikht iz blas vi bay a toyt'n. di oygn tif in kop arayngekrokhn. ikh freg bay im khaver, vos iz dir? bist farvundet? ikh bin drey mol adurkhgeshosn in eyn fus un mayne khaveyrim zaynen ale gefaln in shlakht.</p>	<p>The lieutenant asks us to muster all the strength we still have and set off for Minsk. We are already no more than 9 kilometers from the city.</p> <p>The lieutenant not only asks, but also helps each of us up with the words: "Comrades, we have already passed the first hurdle. And with courage and faith in our victory we will achieve everything!"</p> <p>We begin to take the first steps into the forest. The further and deeper we get into the forest, the more soldiers are around us. Some lie hungry and overtired in the grass and sleep, some lie wounded and with dried lips - and nobody gives them sanitary help.</p> <p>There is no discipline at all anymore. Soldiers no longer follow their commanders, commanders no longer follow their lieutenants, and so it continues all the way up to the colonel.</p> <p>In front of me walks a young soldier leaning on his rifle. His pants are bloodstained and torn. His face is pale like a dead man. His eyes are deep in their sockets. I ask him: "Comrade, what about you? Are you wounded?" "I took three bullet holes in my leg, and my comrades were all killed in battle.</p>	
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*Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka*

<p>...Daytshn zaynen tsheshpreyt iber der gantser leng un brayt fun der gantser vaysrusisher erd, zogt er mir mit treyn in di oygn.- hostu nisht epes tsum roykhern, khaver? fregt er mikh.</p> <p>ikh gib im abisl tabak vos farbahalt zikh nokh in keshene, oysgemisht mit breklekh broyt. -ikh vil nokh roykhern a papiros und an-shtarbn, zogt mir der farvundeter soldat, ven ikh shit arayn in hant dem tabak fun keshene.</p> <p>-vu iz der front, khaver?-fregt ikh bay im. -der front iz tsheshpreyt umetum. undzere soldatn zaynen in a shlekhter lage, zogt er mir vayter, - mir muzn zen vos shneler aribertsugeyn Minsk, vayl di Daytshn kenen yede minut kumen fun der luftn mit parachutistn.</p> <p>mir geyen itst tsevorfn ibern vald. bay yedn boym- lign soldatn mit aropgelozte kep. ot zeen mir an oyto bay velkhn es shteyen polkovnikes un shtudirn a mape. di zun bakt shtark. dos zamd brent unter di fis. mir geyen itst tsu a dorf, vos shteyt oyfn rand fun vald.</p> <p>dos dorf iz balagert mit militer fun ale opteylungen. men zet pyekhote, kavalye, tankistn, flier un zeyer fil kozakn mit di groyse, horike pelerines vi zey zitsn oyf kleyne, mogere ferdlekh, oder lign oyfn groz un dos ferdl shteyt</p>	<p>...The Germans are scattered across the length and breadth of Belarusian soil," he says with tears in his eyes and asks me, "don't you have something to smoke, comrade?"</p> <p>I hand him some tobacco that was still hiding in my pocket, mixed with pieces of bread. "I want to smoke another cigarette and then - die", the wounded soldier tells me as I pour the tobacco from my pocket into his hand.</p> <p>"Where is the front, comrade?", I ask him. "The front has spread everywhere," he says, "our soldiers are in a bad situation. We have to see if we can get over to Minsk faster, because the Germans may arrive any minute from the air with parachutes."</p> <p>We are now walking absentmindedly through the forest. Soldiers are lying against every tree with their heads hanging down. There we see a truck where colonels are standing and studying a map. The sun is baking strongly. The sand burns under our feet. We are now walking to a village located on the edge of the forest.</p> <p>The village is besieged by military of all divisions. One can see Russian infantry, cavalry, tank drivers, pilots and a great deal of Cossacks with their big, hairy tippets, sitting on their small, skinny horses, or lying on the grass with their</p>	
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<p>danebn un halt dem kop tif aruntergeboygn tsu di fis. dos ferd filt mit di gefar vos dernentert zikh mit yeder minut.</p> <p>in dorf iz faran a hiltserner brunem-a bavaksener mit grinem mokh. ibern brunem hengt a langer, dembover klots. bay eyn ek fun klots zaynen ongebundn tsvey shvere shteyner. baym tsveytn ek-a langer, diner shtekn oyf velkhn es hengt a shverer, hiltsemer. arum brunem shteyen oysgemisht soldatn un tsivile,</p> <p>froyen mit kleyne kinder oyf di hent shteyen in der zayt mit farveynte oygn un betn abisele vaser in a blekhener pushke.</p>	<p>little horses standing next to them, holding their heads bent low to the ground. The horse, too, feels the danger that is approaching every moment.</p> <p>In the village, there is a wooden well overgrown with green moss. Above the well hangs a long beam made of oak. Two heavy stones are tied to one end of the beam. At the other end hangs a heavy, wooden bucket. Soldiers and civilians are standing around the fountain.</p> <p>Women with small children in their arms stand at the side with teary eyes, asking to get a little water in a tin can.</p>	
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<p>ober keyner shenkt nit keyn oyfmerkzamkeyt di froyen mit di kinder oyf di hent. yederer iz mit zikh farnumen. bay yedern brent di tsung vi heyse koyln un yederer vil vos shneler dos leshn.</p> <p>soldatn formirn a ray un itst shteyen ale, eyner hintern tsveytn, mit di oygn gevendet tsu dem vos rukt arayn dem kop in emer un trinkt un trinkt, un vil dem kop nisht opraysn fun emer. mir, fun undzerer grupe, shteyen oykh ale in der ray, eyner hintern andern.</p>	<p>But no one pays attention to the women with their children in their arms. Everyone is busy with himself. Everyone's tongue is burning like hot coals, and everyone wants to cool it as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Soldiers form a line, and now they all stand, one behind the other, looking at the one who holds his head in the bucket and doesn't want to stop drinking or even pull his head away from the bucket again. We from our group are also all in line, one behind the other.</p>	
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<p>mir darfn nokh zeyer lang vartn biz es vet kumen tsu undz der emer, vayl ver es geyt tsu tsu dem emer on a pushke tsi a kendl-rukt arayn dem kop tsuzamen mit di hent in emer un a helft vaser gist zikh oys oyf di fis. dan kumen di shtarke krigerayen un etlekhe mol iz shoyn gekumen tsu geshlegn un afile tsu a shiseray fun revolvorn eyner oyfn tsveytn.</p> <p>ale soldatn un ofitsirn zaynen do beyz eyner oyfn andern. men hert a sakh miese un shmusike verter. es falt oykh dos vort „prodatel“ (farkoyfter) un far aza vort kumt tsu a heysn geshleg un ver es zol tsesheydn iz nishto. keynem art nisht eynem farn tsveytn. fir khaveyrim fun undzer grupe vern mid un geyen aroys fun der ray. drey blaybn shteyn. ikh bin fun di drey. foroys fun mir shteyt a leytenant un zayn moyl vert nisht geshlosn oyf keyn moment. er halt alts in shrayen un sheltn.</p> <p>der leytenant-a hoykher, shtarker yung mit a roytn, opgebrentn ponim fun der zun, di bluze tseshpilet, vi er volt itst gekumen fun a groyser shverdn-shlakht.</p> <p>-khaveyrim- zogt er tsu di vos shteyen arum im-mir hobn vayter nisht vos tsu kemfn. mir hobn dem krig farshpilt. in Minsk zaynen shoyn di Daytshn. mir veln ale, geshlosene, geyn in plen, vayl s'hot nisht keyn zin undzer vayterdiker kamf. yederer kert um dem kop tsum leytenant, velkher redt itst tsu di soldatn.</p>	<p>We have to wait a very long time for the bucket to come to us too, because those who go to the bucket without a tin can or a ladle have to push their heads into the bucket together with their hands, and half the water pours out onto their feet. Then there are fierce arguments, and a few times there are also fights and finally even that one shoots at the other with a revolver.</p> <p>Many ugly and indecent words are heard. Even the term "prodatel", traitor, is used - and after this word there is a heated quarrel and there is no one to separate the quarrelsome people. No one is bothered by what the other is doing.</p> <p>Four comrades from our group get tired and leave the line. Three remain standing, I am among them. In front of me is a lieutenant who can't keep his mouth shut. He does not stop shouting and ranting.</p> <p>The lieutenant, a tall, strong young man with a red, sunburned face, wears an unbuttoned shirt as if he had just come from a great sword battle.</p> <p>"Comrades," he says to the bystanders, "there is no reason for us to fight anymore! We have lost the war. The Germans are already in Minsk. Let's all go into captivity together, because there is no point in fighting any more".</p> <p>Everyone looks around at the lieutenant, who is now speaking to the soldiers.</p>	
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mit yeder minut zamlen zikh arum im alts mer un  
mer. es hern zikh bashtetikungen fun di zaytn, az  
„s'iz rikhtik, vos der

With each passing moment, more people gather  
around him. From the sides confirmations are  
heard, "it is true what ...



*Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka*

<p>khaver leytenant zogt. mir hobn take nisht nokh vos tsu kempfn; umzist fargisn blut“...</p> <p>der leytenant, herndik az er bakumt onhenger far zayn plan- vert mit yeder minut alts dreyster un redt itst vayter:</p> <p>-khaveyrim, mir veln ale ineynem geyn in plen. ikh vel aykh alemen firn un dort veln mir hobn genug tsum es nun tsum trinken.</p> <p>tsvishn ale farzamlte soldatn shteyt in a zayt eyner a yungerer-di oygn-tif ayngegrobn in gezikht fun leytenant. ot ze ikh vi der kleyner soldat iz shnel aroys fun der grupe un iz mit shnele trit tsugelofn tsum noentstn shayer bay velkhn es zaynen geshtanen etlekhe polkovnikes un politishe komisarn. in dem zelbn oygnblik ze ikh vi der zelber soldat loyft tsurik. hinter im loyfn nokh tsvey soldatn fun NKVD un a mayor. zey blaybn shteyn leben der ongezamltter grupe soldatn, vos hern oys mit ofene meyler di verter fun zeyer „reter“, vos vil zey firn in gefangenshaft, „vu s’iz faran a sakh esn un trinken“...</p> <p>der mayor blaybt shteyn leben leytenant.</p> <p>-passport?- tut er a freg dem leytenant mit a hoykher shtime. der leytenant farlirt zikh nisht. er git nokh a farbahaltenem shmeykhl un nemt aroys zayn pas.</p> <p>-fun velkhn polk?- fregt vayter der mayor un git glaykhtsaytik a vunk mit an oyg di tsvey soldatn,</p>	<p>the comrade lieutenant is telling us. In fact, it no longer makes sense to fight. It's just unnecessary bloodshed!"</p> <p>Hearing that he is getting supporters for his plan, the lieutenant becomes bolder and bolder and now continues to speak:</p> <p>"Comrades, let's all go into captivity together. I will lead you all and there we will have enough to eat and drink!"</p> <p>Among all the gathered soldiers, a younger one stands sideways, and his eyes fix intensely on the lieutenant's face. Now I see how this small soldier quickly leaves the group and runs with quick steps to the next barn, where several colonels and political commissars are standing. And at the same moment I see this soldier already coming back, behind him two soldiers from the NKVD and a major. They stop next to the gathering of soldiers who listen with open mouths to the words of their "rescuer" who wants to lead them into captivity "where there is a lot to eat and drink"...</p> <p>The major stops next to the lieutenant.</p> <p>"Passport?" he asks the lieutenant in a loud voice. The latter is not embarrassed, but takes out his passport with an implied smile.</p> <p>"From which regiment?" the major continues to ask, simultaneously waving his eyes at the two</p>	
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<p>velkhe shteyen in der rekhter un linker zayt fun leytenant.</p> <p>-ver iz geven der polkovnik fun ayer polk?-fregt vayter der mayor. der leytenant, velkher iz frier geven azoy royt oyfn ponim, iz plitsung gevorn vays vi a shtik royt papir, vos men shmirt op mit vayser farb.</p> <p>-ikh, ikh hob fargesn dem nomen fun polkovnik...ikh gedenk nisht azoy gut...vayl...ikh kum itst fun a groyser shlakht un ikh hob alts fargesn, khaver mayor.</p> <p>der mayor git a vunk tsu di tsvey soldatn un in zelbn oygnblik zaynen shoyt di hent fun dreystn leytenant fest fardreyt oyf arunter un men nemt glaykh fun im arop dem pas mitn revolver,</p>	<p>soldiers standing to the lieutenant's right and left.</p> <p>"Who is the colonel of your regiment?" the major continues to ask. The lieutenant, who used to have such a red face, has suddenly turned white like a piece of red paper that you smear with white paint.</p> <p>"I, I forgot the colonel's name...I don't remember it so well...because...I just came from a big battle, and I forgot everything, Comrade Major!"</p> <p>The major gives a wave to the two soldiers, and at the same moment the hands of the brazen lieutenant are turned firmly downward, and they immediately take from him his passport and his revolver,</p>	
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<p>velkher iz nisht geven arayngeton in dem ledernem sheydl, nor farshtupt untern pas, vi di merhayt hot dan getrogn.</p> <p>a shtark geshray hot zikh gehert fun dem leytenant, velkhn men hot itst gefirt, di hent fardreyt oyf hintn.</p> <p>yederer iz nokhgegangen vi nokh a levaye. men hot im aruntergefirt arop dem bergl, vu es iz geshtanen der shayer, bay velkhn es shteyen fil</p>	<p>which (he) has not stuck in the leather scabbard, but has been stuffed under the passport, as the majority carry these weapons.</p> <p>A loud shouting can be heard from the lieutenant, who is now being led away with his hands twisted backwards.</p> <p>Everyone goes after him, like after a funeral. He has been led down the hill to where the barn is located, by which many officers are standing with</p>	
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<p>ofitsirn mit tseefnete mapes. zey varfn gornisht keyn blikn oyf dem vos kumt do for.</p> <p>men hot dem nor vos azoy shtoltsn leytenant mitn roytn gezikht-bafrayt di hent un der komisar, vos iz geshtanen tsvishn der grupe vos hot shtudirt di mapes un iz itst tsugekumen aher, hot aroysgekhaft dem revolver un es hot zikh derhert a knak, vos hot opgeklungen mit an ekho.</p> <p>di koyl hot getrofn in kop, leben nakn, un der hoykher, shtarker mentsh iz itst anidergefaln vi an untergezegter demb. a shtrom royt blut hot glaykh farflekt dos grine groz. a khorkhl hot zikh gehert fun ligndikn leytenant un iz glaykh ibergerisn gevorn mit a letstn toytkrekhts.</p> <p>der komisar vos hot fardint di mitsve hot glaykh bafoyln tsvey soldatn, az zey zoln oyston di kleyder fun toytn un alts gut durkhtapn.</p> <p>a gantse makhne hent zaynen aroyf oyfn leytenants guf. eyner shlept a shtivl, der tsveyter-an arbl fun der bluze. in etlekhe sekundes iz der geshosener shoyn gelegn in zayn farblutikte vesh un yeder vos iz dort geshtanen hot im derlangt a shtoyts mitn fus, vi men varft a pilke, velkhe ligt in a groyser blote.</p> <p>der komisar mitn mayor shteyen un leyenen di papirn, velkhe faln aroys fun di keshenes oyf der erd. leben mir shteyen tsvey soldatn un tapn yede not fun di hoyzn. plustlung derhert zikh a</p>	<p>maps unfolded. They do not pay attention to the incident at all.</p> <p>The red-faced lieutenant, who has just been so proud, has his shackles removed, and the commissar, who has been standing in the middle of the group studying the maps is approaching now, taking out his revolver. We are hearing a bang that echoes.</p> <p>The bullet hit the head next to the neck, and the tall, strong man has now fallen down like a sawed-off oak. Immediately, a stream of red blood has stained the green grass. The lying lieutenant has given another gasp, which is immediately interrupted by a final death moan.</p> <p>The inspector, who has done his duty, has ordered two soldiers to take off the dead man's clothes and search everything thoroughly.</p> <p>A large number of hands are immediately <b>busy with</b> the lieutenant's body. One pulls on a boot, the other on the sleeve of his shirt. In a few seconds, the shot person is already lying in his bloody underwear, and everyone who has stood there gives him a kick with his foot, like kicking a ball that is lying in a large puddle of mud.</p> <p>The commissioner and the major are standing and reading the papers that fall from the pockets (of the clothes) onto the ground. Next to me are two soldiers who feel every seam of the pants.</p>	
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<p>geshray fun a soldat, velkher hot ongetapt in rand fun di hoyzn a shtikl hart papir.</p> <p>glaykh iz tsugelofn der komisar mitn mayor un hobn oyfgetrent. a shtikl tsenoyfgeleygt, din papir, iz aroysgefaln. yederer shtrengt on zayn blik un vil iberleyenen</p>	<p>Suddenly there is a scream from a soldier who has felt a piece of hard paper in the rim of the trousers.</p> <p>Immediately, the commissioner and the major are running to him, undoing the seam. A piece of folded, thin paper has fallen out. Everyone looks with strained eyes and wants to be the first to read</p>	
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<p>vos dort shteyt geshribn. ober der mayor git a geshray un glaykhtsaytik a klap iber der pleytse fun dem yingn soldat, velkher iz frier geshtanen azoy ruik un oysgehert di sheyne droshe fun leytenant.</p> <p>-khaveyrim, er iz geven a Daytsher shpion! a parachutist vos hot zikh farshtelt far a leytenant in a rusisher uniforme! bravo, khaver! shrayt der komisar, haltndik dos papir in hant.</p> <p>yederer iz shteyn geblibn un hot zikh aley nisht gekent gloybn, az der leytenant, velkher hot azoy gut geredt rusish, vi an ekhter Moskver rus, zol gor zayn a Daytsh.</p> <p>mir zamlen zikh vider oyf tsuzamen leben a boym, bay velkhn es lign nokh etlekhe soldatn mit geshvolene fis un undzer leytenant zogt:</p>	<p>what is written on it. But the major exclaims something and at the same time, he gives a pat on the shoulder to the young soldier who was standing there so quietly before, listening to the lieutenant's "beautiful speech".</p> <p>"Comrades, he was a German spy! A parachutist, who posed as a lieutenant in a Russian uniform! Bravo, comrade!" shouts the commissar, holding the paper in his hand.</p> <p>Everyone has stopped and simply cannot believe that the lieutenant, who spoke Russian as well as a real Muscovite, was actually a German!</p> <p>We gather again as a group next to a tree, where several soldiers are still lying with swollen feet, and our lieutenant says:</p>	
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<p>-khaveyrim, mir darfn geyn vayter. mir zaynen shoy'n abisl oysgerut un itst vider in veg arayn!</p> <p>leben undz zaynen gezesn soldatn un hobn oysgehert di verter fun undzer leytenant.</p> <p>-khaveyrim, vuhin vilt ir geyn-fregt undz a soldat velkher ligt mit di fis ongeshpart in dem boym.</p> <p>-mir viln geyn tsu Minsk un tsiln tsu der Berezine, entfert im undzer leytenant.</p> <p>-vi azoy vet ir adurkhgeyn di shtot? es zaynen dokh opgeshlosn ale vegn. di Daytshn zaynen dokh shoy'n in Minsk mit a shtarkn desant. mir zaynen ale geblibn zitsn vi farglivert, oysherndik dem barikht fun soldat.</p> <p>-mir muzn vartn do in vald biz di nakht vet kumen veln mir dan aroysgeyn in ongrif un adurkhraysn di shtot. itst kenen mir nisht geyn, vayl di luft iz bahersht fun daytshishe avyonen vos flien iber di kep, ven men geyt nor aroys oyfn frayen feld.</p> <p>-iz dos rikhtik, khaver? fregt im iber undzer leytenant un mir ale zaynen ongeshtrengt tsu hern yeder vort vos kumt aroys fun soldats moyl.</p>	<p>"Comrades, we have to move on. We are already somewhat rested and now let's go on our way again!"</p> <p>Some soldiers have been sitting next to us, listening to the lieutenant's words.</p> <p>"Comrades, where are you going?" asks us one of the soldiers, lying there with his feet propped up on a tree.</p> <p>"We want to go to Minsk and continue towards the Berezina," our lieutenant answers.</p> <p>"How are you going to get through the city? All the roads are closed. The Germans are already in Minsk with a strong incursion".</p> <p>Listening to the soldiers' report, all of us have been sitting frozen.</p> <p>"We have to wait here in the forest until night falls, then we want to go on the attack and fight our way through the city. Right now we can not go, because the air is dominated by German planes that fly over our heads, just as soon as we go out into the open field".</p> <p>"Is that really so, comrade?" the lieutenant asks again, and we all are listening intently to hear what the soldier might answer.</p>	
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<p>yo, khaveyrim. s'iz rikhtik. mir hobn shoy'n gepruvt geyn, ober dos feld vos firt tsu Minsk iz baleygt mit toyte soldatn.</p>	<p>"Yes, comrades, it's true! We have already tried to go on ourselves, but the field leading to Minsk is already covered with dead soldiers!"</p>	
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<p>-khaveyrim, oyfshteyn! mir veln aleyn geyn, veln mir zikh ibertseygn, zogt tsu undz der leytenant un ale shteyen shoyn greyt in veg arayn. di zun halt zikh shoyn baym tunken. fun tsvishn di gedikhte nodl-tsvaygn shaynen arayn in tunkeln vald di farnakhtike shtraln.</p> <p>der himl zet zikh aroys shtiklekhvayz fun di tsvaygn.</p> <p>mir marshirn ale in eyn ray in der tifenish fun vald. der gantser veg iz oysgeleygt mit soldatn. ver es shloft un ver es zitst un zukht tsvishn di net fun zayn hemd.</p> <p>-vuhin geyt ir khaveyrim? hert zikh a shtim fun a ligndikn mayor, velkher makht tsu undz mit der hant, mir zoln tsugeyn tsu im. mir geyen ale in der rikhtung tsu im un blaybn ale shteyn arum im.</p> <p>-mir geyen tsu der Berezine durkh Minsk, zogt im der leytenant.</p> <p>-ir veyst, az der veg iz opgeshnitn un keyner ken nisht geyn vayter? zogt mit a kaltn ton der mayor.</p> <p>mir shvaygn. eyner varft a blik oyfn tsveytn un di oygn fregn: vos vet itst zayn? vuhin zoln mir itst geyn?</p> <p>-blaybt do lign, khaveyrim, biz men vet aykh rufn, ven s'vet vern fintster. mir veln alts ton oyf tsu makhn a veg, mir zoln kenen kumen tsum front, oyf der tsveyter zayt Berezine.</p> <p>mir zaynen shteyn geblibn, nit visndik vos tsu ton. geyn vayter iz itst geven umeglekh. mir</p>	<p>"Comrades, get up! We will go alone and see for ourselves!", the lieutenant says to us, and we are already standing ready on the way. The sun is already sinking. Its evening rays are shining through the dense coniferous branches into the dark forest.</p> <p>Pieces of the sky are peeking out from between the branches.</p> <p>In the depths of the forest, we all march in a line. The whole path is covered with soldiers. One is sleeping, the other is sitting and looking for something between the seams of his shirt.</p> <p>"Where are you going, comrades?" we hear the voice of a reclining major beckoning us toward him.</p> <p>We all go towards him and stop around him.</p> <p>"We are going through Minsk to the Berezina," the lieutenant answers him.</p> <p>"Don't you know that the road is blocked off and no one can go any further?" says the major in a cold undertone.</p> <p>We are silent. One of us glances at the other, and our eyes ask: "What will happen now? Where shall we go now?"</p> <p>"Lie here, comrades, until you are called, then, when it becomes dark. We want to do everything we can to open a path so that we can get to the front on the other side of the Berezina!"</p> <p>We have stopped and do not know what to do. To go further is impossible now. We decide to</p>	
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<p>bashlisen tsu vartn biz es vet fintster vern un di fayntlekhe avyonen veln farshvindn fun himl, dan veln mir aroyen in kamf kegn di por tsendlik parachutistn.</p> <p>mir zetsn zikh leben a frayen boym. yederer nemt zikh tsu di torbes, velkhe zaynen shoyen bald leydik.</p> <p>in vald kumen tsu mit yeder minut alts mer un mer soldatn un tsivile. yeder blaybt zitsn oyfn groz un men vart oyfn moment, ven mir veln aroysgeyn in kamf.</p> <p>plitsung hert zikh a shtarker geroysh fun an avyon, velkher flit zeyer niderik iber di beymer.</p>	<p>wait until it gets dark and the enemy planes disappear from the sky. Then we want to go out to fight against the few dozens of parachutists.</p> <p>We sit down next to a "free" tree and take our provision bags, which are almost empty.</p> <p>In the forest, more and more soldiers and civilians arrive every moment. Everyone remains sitting on the grass and we wait for the moment to go out into battle.</p> <p>Suddenly, we hear a loud sound of an airplane flying very low over the trees.</p>	
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<p>oysleshn dos fayer! hert zikh fun ale zaytn a bafel fun di ofitsirn tsu di velkhe zitsn baym fayer. ale lign di kep farbahalt n hintern tsveytn.</p> <p>ver es loyft fun boym tsum boym a tsetumler, nisht visndik vu zikh tsu leygn, nisht visndik vu s'iz a zikher plats.</p> <p>eyner a soldat, velkher ligt nisht vart fun undz, hot oysgeshosn fun zayn biks tsum avyon, velkher iz itst gefloygn iber undz. in dem zelbn oygnblik hot der avyon aroysgelozt a vaysn volkn roykh, velkher iz geblibn hengen ibern vald. iber undzere kep.</p> <p>-shneler, khaveyrim, antloyft! men vet bald bashisn dos vald!- shrayt der leytenant, velkher iz</p>	<p>"Put out the fire," we hear officers commanding from all sides to those sitting by the fire. All are lying, their heads hidden behind the other.</p> <p>One person runs confusedly from tree to tree, not knowing where to lie down and where to find a safe place.</p> <p>One of the soldiers, who is not far from us, has shot up with his rifle to the plane that was flying overhead. At the same moment, the plane has let out a cloud of white smoke that is hanging over the forest; above our heads!</p> <p>"Faster, comrades, flee! They are about to shell the forest!" shouts the lieutenant, who is well</p>	
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<p>gut bahavnt in di tsaykhns vos darfn gegeben vern tsu di avyonen. mir shteyen oyf. halb ayngeloygn loyfn mir eyner hintern andern tsum dorf, velkhes shteyt nisht vayt oyfn bergl.</p> <p>Trakh, trararakh! shtiker erd un fayer flien in der luftn, oyf dem plats fun velkhn mir zaynen itst antlofn. vider trakh, trararakh un es flien shtiker royf fayer fun tsvishn di beymer un di ligndike mentshn. mir loyfn shnel foroys tsum dorf.</p> <p>shtiker tsveygn faln oyf undz. shtiker erd tsemisht mit groz faln oyf di kep un farshitn di oygn. mentshn shrayen. vider a snaryad un di mentshn velkhe loyfn far shrek oyf di beymer-faln eyner oyfn tsveytn.</p> <p>ot zeen mir shtiker vortslen, erd un tserisene mentshn. ot flit in der luftn a hant, a kop, a fus, velkhe tsaplen zikh nokh in der luftn. mir zaynen shoyn in dorf. di shiseray vert fun minut tsu minut shtarker un shtarker. dos shish iz alts fun der zelber rikhtung.</p> <p>dos shish shvere harmatn, vos di Daytshn hobn farkhapt bay di rusn. mir lign in a tifn shteynernem keler, oysgeleygt eyner oyfn andern. eyner shrayt „ratevet, ikh bin farvundet!“, ober keyner kukt zikh nisht um oyf im. yeder ligt mitn gantsn kerper ayngedreyt in dreyen. yeder glid tsitert bazunder.</p>	<p>versed in interpreting the signs of aircraft movements. We get up and walk bent over, one behind the other, to the village, which is not far from the village.</p> <p>"Trach, trararach!" Pieces of earth and fiery splinters <b>explode and</b> fly in the air, down to the place from which we have just fled. Again "trach, trararach!", and red, fiery splinters shoot up between the trees and the lying people. We hurry quickly in the direction of the village. Parts of branches fall on us, pieces of earth with grass fall on our heads and get into our eyes. People are screaming. Another artillery round and the people, who have climbed the trees in fright fall down one by one.</p> <p>There we see parts of roots, earth and torn people. And flying through the air are a hand, a head, a foot, still wriggling in the air. Now we are in the village. The shooting gets stronger every moment, always coming from the same direction.</p> <p>It is fired from heavy cannons, which the Germans have captured from the Russians. We are lying in a deep, stone cellar, one on top of the other. One shouts, "Save me, I'm wounded!" but no one looks around for him.</p> <p>Everyone is lying in confusion with their bodies twisted. Every single limb is trembling.</p>	
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*Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka*

<p>fun undzer grupe zaynen mir ale do. keyner iz nisht geblibn in vald. di shiseray halt nokh on. ot falt a sgaryad in dorf. es hert zikh a geshray: „ratevet, ratevet!</p> <p>dos dorf brent. di froyen vos gefinen zikh tsvishn undz veynen un farbrekhn di hent.</p> <p>-keyner zol nisht aroysgeyn fun keler, shrayt a polkovnik velkher ligt baym fentster. zayn gezikht iz blas. di hent tsitern bay im.</p> <p>di shiseray vert shtiler, keyner vil nisht aroysgeyn fun keler. dos dorf shteyt nokh in flamen. dos fayer farshprayt zikh alts mer fun minut tsu minut. der himl iz badekt mit groyse volkns. shtiker shtroy flien tsum himl un faln glaykh aroyf oyf a tsveytn shtroyenem dakh, fun velkhn es raysn zikh shoyn groyse fayer-tsungen tsum himl.</p> <p>di shiseray hot oyfgeherht. eyntsikvayz geyen mir aroys fun keler. dos gantse dorf iz eyn shtik fayer. es hert zikh dos geshray fun brenendike ki un shepsn oysgemisht mit di geshrayen, velkhe trogn zikh fun vald, fun di farvundete soldatn un tsivile.</p> <p>mir loyfn tsurik tsum vald. keyner lesht nisht dos fayer. di poyerim fun dorf, velkhe zaynen zikh tselofn fun di brenendike heyzer, loyfn itst arum vi tsetumlte un veysn nisht vos frier tsu ton. vaser iz nishto. der eyntsiker brunem shteyt itst arumgenumen mit groyse flamen un keyner ken tsu im nisht tsukumen.</p>	<p>All of our group are here. No one has stayed in the forest. The shooting is continuing. Right now, an artillery round explodes in the village! A shout goes up, "help, help!"</p> <p>The village is on fire. The women who are among us are crying and wringing their hands.</p> <p>"No one leaves the cellar!" shouts a colonel lying by the window. His face is pale, his hands are shaking.</p> <p>The shooting dies down, but no one wants to leave the basement. The village is still on fire; the fire is spreading more with every passing moment. There are large cloud fields in the sky. Bundles of straw shoot up to the sky and immediately fall onto a second thatched roof, from which large tongues of fire are already blazing toward the sky.</p> <p>The shooting has stopped. One by one we leave the cellar. The whole village is now on fire. We hear the cries of burning cows and sheep, which are mixed with the cries coming from the forest - from the wounded soldiers and civilians.</p> <p>We walk back to the forest; no one puts out the fire. The farmers from the village who have run out of the burning houses are now confusedly moving around, not knowing what to do first. There is no water. The only well is now surrounded by great flames and no one can get to it.</p>	
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<p>dos vald iz oysgeleygt mit aroysgerisene beymer vi a tseakert feld. mentshn lign ayngelhilt in vortslen un tsveygn. eynike lign gants ruik vi shtiker holts. es trogt zikh bloyz a vaynendik geshray oysgemisht mit trern un veytik:</p> <p>-ratevet, ratevet,khaveyrim!-nor keyner git nisht keyn hilf. men veyst nisht tsu vemen frier tsu geyn. fun unter yedn boym hert zikh dos zelbe geshray, yeder ruft tsu zikh.</p> <p>di nakht iz tsugefaln. mir nehmen zikh tsum aroysshlepn di farvundete fun tsvishn di tsvaygn. andere lign farshotn mit erd un gibn nokh aroys a shtiln krekhts. der polkovnik vos iz tsuzamen mit undz gelegn in keler geyt arum tsvishn di aroysgerisene beymer</p>	<p>The forest is covered with uprooted trees and looks like a plowed field. People are swathed under roots and branches.</p> <p>Some are lying quite still like pieces of wood. All that can be heard is a crying scream, intermixed with tears and pain:</p> <p>"Comrades, save me, save me!" - But no one comes to help. We don't know which one to go to first. From under every tree the same shouting can be heard, everyone is calling us to them.</p> <p>The night is fallen. We set about pulling the wounded out from between the branches.</p> <p>Others lie buried under the earth, still gasping softly. The colonel, who had been in the cellar with us, walks among the uprooted trees,</p>	
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<p>mit revolver in hant un shist di soldatn, bay velkhe es zaynen operisn hent, fis, oder s'iz gor oyfgerisn der boykh.</p> <p>zayne oygn glantsn un di hant in velkher er halt dem revolver tsitert nokh yedn shos, vos flit in shleyf fun farvundetn. di laykhtfarvundete shlept men aroys un men leygt zey in a zayt. etlekhe krankn-shvester shteyen dort un veysn nisht vemen frier tsu gebn hilf.</p> <p>soldatn un tsivile kumen mit yeder minut alts mer un mer tsu.</p> <p>di retungs-hilf farshtarkt zikh. undzer grupe iz itst tsezeyt ibern vald un yeder arbet iber di koykhes. men filt nisht di veytik in di fis, velkhe zaynen nokh geshvoln fun vaytn veg.</p>	<p>revolver in hand, and shoots the soldiers who have their hands and feet torn off, or even their stomachs ripped open.</p> <p>His eyes glisten moistly, and the hand in which he holds the revolver trembles after each shot that hits the wounded man's temple. The lightly wounded are pulled out and placed to the side.</p> <p>Several nurses are standing there, not knowing whom to help first. Every moment, more and more soldiers and civilians arrive, and the rescue operations intensify. Our group is now scattered throughout the forest, and everyone is working beyond their strength. We do not feel the pain in our feet, which are still swollen from the long trek.</p>	
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<p>tsvishn di mentshn fort arum a polkovnik oyf a shvarts ferdl un komandevet mit alemen vos tsu ton. di farvundete mern zikh.</p> <p>di toyte un di, velkhe der polkovnik hot aleyn geshosn, blaybn lign oyf di pletser. yeder iz farton mitn aroystrogn di farvundete, vos men ken nokh gebn hilf. arum vert fintster un fintsterer. mir trogn di farvundete un geyen aroyf oyf di ligndike beymer, oder oyf di toyte vos lign unter yedn trot.</p> <p>es zaynen ongekumen etlekhe oytos oyf velkhe mir lodeven aroyf di farvundete. nokh tsvey sho shverer arbet hobn mir ale farvundete aroysgeshlept fun di tsvaygn un oyfgelodn oyf oytos, velkhe zaynen avekgeform un keyner veyst nisht vuhin.</p> <p>der polkovnik oyfn ferd fort arum un shrayt tsu alemen, men zol zikh tsunoyfzamlen in eyn grupe.</p> <p>dos vald iz vider shvarts fun soldatn un tsivile. es shtromen frische un frische, nor ale zaynen apatish un tsetrogn. bay alemen hersht di zelbe shtimung: farloyrn, farshpilt!..</p> <p>es bavayzt zikh etlekhe tankes, velkhe blaybn shteyn tsvishn di aroysgerisene beymer. di fintstertkeyt vert shtarker. eyner zet nisht dem tsveytn. fayer tor men nisht ontsindn. es hern zikh nor geshrayen in der fintster. ale zamlen zikh tsunoyf in eyn grupe oyf a plats. ver es shtelt a vidershtand, oder vil nisht folgen dem bafel-vert oyfn ort dershosn. un dos makht oyf keynem</p>	<p>Among the people, a colonel rides a black horse and give commands to everyone what to do.</p> <p>The dead, and those shot by the colonel, remain in their places. Everyone is very busy carrying out the wounded who can still be helped. It's getting darker and darker now. We carry the wounded and have to walk with every step over the fallen trees and the dead.</p> <p>Several trucks have arrived on which we load the wounded. After two hours of hard work, we have pulled all the wounded out of the branches and have loaded them onto the trucks, which have now left - to who knows where.</p> <p>The colonel on the horse rides around shouting something to everyone. We are to gather in a group. The forest is again black with soldiers and civilians, new ones keep pouring in, but all are apathetic and upset. The same mood prevails among all of us: "Lost, defeated!" Quite a few tanks appear, stopping between the trees that have been torn out.</p> <p>It's getting pitch black. We no longer see each other, but we are not allowed to make a fire. In the darkness, we hear only screams. Everyone gathers in one place to form a group. Anyone who resists or disobeys the order, will be shot on the spot. And it no longer impresses</p>	
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*Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka*

<p>keyn ayndruk nisht, vos oyf der erd, unter di fis, valgern zikh mentshn vi shteklekh holts.</p> <p>bay eynike toyte shteyen nokh etlekhe soldatn, velkhe tsien arop di shtivl un zukhn in ale keshenes abisl tobak, oder epes andersh. der polkovnik, velkher iz arumgefornt oyfn ferd, iz shteyn geblibn inmitn der mase mentshn. -khaveyrim, mir darfn zikh tsugreytn tsum ongrif-zogt der polkovnik-velkher shteyt itst mit di fis oyfn ferd un redt tsu di soldatn.</p> <p>in a halber sho arum zaynen shoyn geshtanen toyzenter soldatn greyt tsum ongrif. tsvey-drey tankes zaynen geshtanen fornt. leytenants un andere ofizirn shteln oys di mentshn eyner leben dem tsveytn, yeder mit a biks oder granat in hant.</p> <p>foroys iz aroysgefornt der polkovnik mitn ferd, haltndik a blishtshendike shverd in hant, velkhe hot gevorfnt a likht in der arumiker fintsternish. ikh, tsuzamen mit di fun mayn grupe shteyen mir eyner leben andern, nit vayt fun di tanken, velkhe royshn shoyn un zaynen greyt in veg arayn.</p> <p>der himl iz oysgeshternt un a halbe levone shmeykht arop. dos vald iz shmekndik. a kil vintl glet ibern gezikht. arum in shtil, es hert zikh nor dos royshn fun di tanken.</p>	<p>anyone that on the earth, under our feet, people are lying like pieces of wood.</p> <p>A few soldiers are still standing by some of the dead, pulling off their boots and searching in all their pockets for tobacco or anything else. The colonel, who had been riding around on his horse, now stops in the middle of the crowd: "Comrades, we must prepare for the attack," he says, now standing with his feet on the horse as he speaks to the soldiers.</p> <p>Half an hour later, thousands of soldiers are ready to attack. There are two or three tanks in front. The Lieutenants and officers line people up side by side, each with a rifle or grenade in hand.</p> <p>The colonel has been riding ahead on his horse, with a glistening sword in his hand, reflecting a light into the surrounding darkness. I and my group are also standing next to each other, not far from the tanks, which are already noisy and ready to go.</p> <p>The sky is starry and the crescent moon smiles down. The forest is fragrant, a cool wind blows across your face. It is quiet, only the sound of the tanks can be heard.</p>	
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<p>-khaveyrim, zayt greyt! farn foterland, foroys, foroys!-shrayt oys der polkovnik, velkher iz shoyn aroysgeforn der ershter.</p> <p>di gantse mentshn-mase hot gerirt fun ort. yederer halt greyt di granatn un biks. ot zaynen mir shoyn leben di ershte heyzlekh fun Minsk. arum iz shtil. mir shteln lange trit foroys tsu der shtot.</p> <p>Plutsung-fun bayde zaytn shosey un feld- a shiseray fun mashin-gever un a hagl fun granatn oyf der marshirndiker makhne. mir varfn tsurik undzere granatn. a shiseray fun ale zaytn un soldatn faln unter di fis vi flign. mir loyfn foroys. ot zaynen mir shoyn in shtot. fun yeder hoyz shist men oyf undz.</p>	<p>"Comrades, be ready! For our fatherland, ahead, ahead!" exclaims the colonel, who has already ridden ahead first.</p> <p>The whole crowd has started to move. Everyone has the grenades and guns ready. Now we are already next to the first houses of Minsk! All around is silence. In long steps we go forward to the city.</p> <p>Suddenly, from both sides of the main road and the field, a barrage of machine-gun fire and a hail of grenades hit the marching crowd. We throw back with our grenades. Under a flurry of gunfire from all sides, soldiers fall at our feet like flies. We run ahead.</p> <p>Now we are already in the city, but we are being shot at from every house!</p>	
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<p>di shlakht vert shtarker.</p> <p>royte fayern loyfn in der arumiker fintsternish. ot falt a koyl un treft undzer leytenant in brust. er falt oyf hintn. mentshn loyfn iber im un vayter. dos fayer vert shtarker fun ale zaytn. mentshn lign eyner oyfn tsveytn.</p> <p>men shrayt: hura, hura, foroys!</p>	<p>The battle is getting stronger.</p> <p>Red fires are flickering in the surrounding darkness. There! A bullet hits our lieutenant in the chest! He falls over backwards. People run over him and hurry on. The hail of fire from all sides becomes more and more intense. People lie on top of each other.</p> <p>Yells are ringing out, "Ura, Ura, ahead!"</p>	
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<p>a granat falt nisht vayt fun mir un treft mir mit a shpliter in linkn fus. ikh fal tsu der erd un fil vi es vert mir varem. Kh'rir on di vund mit der hant un kh'shpir a shvakhkeyt un veytik in kerper. ikh vil zikh oyfshteln, ober umzist. di iberike soldatn loyfn tsurik tsum vald. dos fayer vert shtarker. ikh her nokh geshrayen fun farvundete, velkhe lign leben mir.</p> <p>ikh nem mit der hant un drik aroys dos shtikl ayzn vos ligt nisht tif in beyn. a shtarker veytik dergeyt mir untern hartsn. ikh fal oyf der erd mitn gantsn kerper un veys vayter nisht vos es geshet mit mir.</p>	<p>A shell hits not far from me, and a splinter hits me in my left leg. I fall to the ground and feel myself getting hot. I feel the wound with my hand and feel weakness and pain in my body. I want to get up again, but in vain. The remaining soldiers run back to the forest. Still more fire everywhere. I can still hear cries of wounded lying next to me.</p> <p>With my hand, I squeeze the iron splinter, which has not stuck deep into my leg. A sharp pain under my heart runs through me. I hit the ground with my whole body, and then I don't know what's happening to me.</p>	
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