

## Krinik in Khurbn

Pages 121- 130



*Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka*

<p>der mototsikl iz geven a tsveyiker, mit a tsugetshepeter „vane“. ikh bin glaykh arayngevorfn gevorn in „vane“ arayn un er hot mir gebrakht in zshandarmerye arayn. gleykh hot men mikh arayngevorfn in a keler, vu s’iz geven shtark fintster un nas. ikh bin gefaln oyfn nasn tsement un hob nisht banumen vos do geshet.</p> <p>ikh tap an di keshene un zukh mayn revolver. vu iz mayn revolver? Levit vart oyf mir un ikh lig do in di merderishe hent fun di daytshn. in der ershter minut hob ikh gornisht gevust, vos mit mir tut zikh.</p> <p>vos zol ikh zey zogn? far vemen zaynen di medikamenten? oder zol ikh gor zogn, az der rukzak iz nisht mayner? neyn, ikh vel zogn, az ikh trog dos far di yidn velkhe arbetn oyfn shosey un az ikh arbet oykh dortn. dos vet zayn der bester terets.</p> <p>ikh her a klapn fun shlislen in der ayzerner tir, zi efnt zikh oyf un tsvey hoykhe merder bavayzn zikh baym arayngang, mit biksn in di hent. bayde zaynen shiker un faln shier fun di fis.</p> <p>-oyfshteyn, farflukhter yude, donerveter! ikh shtey oyf un blayb shteyn mitn blik gevendet tsu di tsvey royte gezikhter mit di fargosene oygn.</p> <p>-foroys, in kantselarye, shnel! un a shturkh mitn priklad in mayn zayt.</p>	<p>The motorcycle was a dyad, equipped with a sidecar. I was immediately thrown into the sidecar and taken to the gendarmerie. There, I was immediately thrown into a cellar, where it was very dark and wet. I fell on the wet cement and did not understand what was going on.</p> <p>Fumbling at my pocket, I look for my revolver. Where is my revolver? Levit is waiting for me, and I am lying there, in the murderous hands of the Germans. At the first moment, I don't know what is happening to me at all.</p> <p>What should I tell them, also in terms of who the medication is for? Or should I say that the backpack is not mine? No, I'll say that I'm carrying it for the Jews who work on the highway, and that I myself also work there. That will be the best excuse.</p> <p>I hear the rattle of keys on the iron door. It opens and two tall assassins appear at the entrance, with guns in their hands. Both are drunk and almost unable to hold themselves up straight. "Get up, cursed Jew, damn it!" I get up and stop, my gaze turning to the two red faces with their watery eyes.</p> <p>"Ahead, to the government office, quickly!" And a thrust into my side with the butt of the rifle is following.</p>	
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ven ikh bin arayngekumen in kantselsrye zaynen di tsvey bagleyter shteyn geblibn leben der tir un ikh-in der mit tsimer. in a zayt, baym fentster, iz gezesn a hoykher leytenant mit di oygn gevendet tsu mir.

zayn blik hot mikh durkhgeshtokhn bizn hartsn. di groyse briln farukt oyfn shtern. oyfn shraybtish iz gelegn ongevorfn papirn. ikh bashlis nisht tsu zogn mayn rikhtikn nomen. kh'vel ongebn dem nomen fun mayn bruder, velkher iz in Rusland.

-vi iz dayn nomen?

Osher Soyfer.

-far vemen hostu getrogn di medikamentn?  
far di yidn vos arbetn oyfn shosey.

When I entered the office, the two companions stopped next to the door, and I - in the middle of the room. At the side, by the window, sat a tall lieutenant looking at me.

His gaze pierced me up to the heart.

He had pushed his large glasses up onto his forehead.

Piles of papers lay on the desk. I decide not to give my real name. I will give the name of my brother who is in Russia.

"What's your name?"

"Osher Soyfer."

"Who were you carrying the drugs for?"

"For the Jews who work on the highway".



" *Wehrmachtsgespann*", <https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Wehrmachtsaespenn.jpg>, source: Opas Fotoalbum, Beutemaschine, Gillet Herstal 720, author: OBZWAR, Diese Datei ist unter der [Creative-Commons-Lizenz](#) „*Namensnennung – Weitergabe unter gleichen Bedingungen 3.0 Deutschland*“ lizenziert, Bedingungen der [GNU-Lizenz für freie Dokumentation](#), no changes made

<p>do ze ikh, vi fun untern tish shlept er aroys dem ruk-zak un shit alts aroys oyfn tish. ver hot dir dos alts gegeben? ikh blayb shteyn fartrakht un veys nisht vos tsu entfernen.</p> <p>plutsung a vilder geshray un a klap in tish, az alts iz oyfgeschprungen in der luftn: -ver hot dir dos gegeben, farflukhter, shmutsiker yude? tsum donerveter nokhmol! der yudnrat, ha? der yudnrat! nu veln mir bald zen!</p> <p>er hot genumen dos telefon-traybl un in tsen minut arum iz arayn der yudneltster, Yosl Golts. er iz shteyn geblibn a blaser, varfndik ibergeshrokene blikn say oyf mir un say oyfn zshandar, velkher hot itst faroykhert a grobn tsignar.</p> <p>-konen zi dem man? -yavohl!-entfert der yudneltster. -hobn zi im gegeben medikamentn far di yidn velkhe arbetn oyf der shtrase-boy? der yudneltster iz shteyn geblibn mit oysgeglotste oygn un nisht gevust vos tsu entfernen. mayn harts hot ongehoybn shtarker tsu klapn, s'hot zikh mir gevolt oysshrayen: „zog, az yo, zog-vestu mayn leben rateven!“</p>	<p>That's when I see him pull my backpack out from under the table and dump it all on the table. " Who did you get all this from?" I remain thoughtfully standing and do not know what to answer.</p> <p>Suddenly a wild shout and a bang on the table so that everything is jumping into the air. "Who handed this to you, cursed, dirty Jew? Damn it! The Judenrat, huh? The Judenrat! Well, we'll see about that!"</p> <p>He picked up the phone, and after ten minutes the „Judenältester“ (Jewish elder), Yosl Goltz, came in. Being pale, he stopped, casting frightened glances both at me and at the gendarme, who was now smoking a coarse cigar.</p> <p>"Do you know this man?" "Yes, I do," the "Judenälteste" answers. "Did you give him medicine for the Jews working on the road construction?" The "Judenälteste" stood there with his eyes wide open, not knowing what to answer. My heart began to beat harder; I would have liked to shout out, "Say that yes, say it, and save my life with it!"</p>	
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<p>nor a hoyb mit di akslen un a shokl mitn kop-a shtiler „neyn“ hot zikh gehert in der ongefilter luft mit toyt un leben.</p> <p>-o, itst iz mir shoyn klor far vemen du host getrogn-un shvere trit hobn zikh dernentert tsu mir- itst veys ikh shoyn alts, ver du bist! zog shnel, ver zaynen dayne kameraden, di banditn, di partizaner?</p> <p>un a shvere, horike lape iz gefaln oyf mayn gezikht. shvartse koyln hobn zikh formirt far di oygn un di fis hobn zikh untergebokhn. a tsveyter, shtarker khmal untern hartsn hot mikh ingantsn tsemisht un a kalter shvays iz mir aroys oyfn gantsn kerper.</p>	<p>But he only raised his shoulders, shook his head, and a silent "no" was heard in the air, which was suffused with death and life.</p> <p>"Oh, now I already realize for whom you were wearing <b>the backpack!</b>", and heavy footsteps approached me, "now I already know exactly who you are! Tell me quickly, who are your comrades, these bandits, the partisans?"</p> <p>And a heavy, hairy paw fell into my face. I saw only black dots in front of my eyes, and my legs gave way under me. A second, violent blow near my heart robbed me of consciousness, and a cold sweat broke out all over my body.</p>	
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<p>vayter veys ikh nisht vos mit mir iz geshen. ven ikh hob oyfgeefnt di oygn bin ikh gelegn a naser. dos ponim iz mir geven geshvoln, oyf der bluze-fatruknte shtiker blut. der gantser kerper iz mir geven vi durkhgelekhert. yedn glid hob ikh gefilt bazunder. di oygn hobn zikh mir geklept. arum hob ikh gefilt geshvolene, bloye shtiklekh fleysh, velkhe zaynen geven heys vi fayer.</p> <p>kh'bin oyfgeshtanen vi fun a kholem. vu bin ikh do in der velt? vu zaynen mayne khaveyrim? vu iz der revolver (1)? iz dos nisht mer vi a kholem geven?</p>	<p>I don't know what happened to me after that. When I opened my eyes, I was lying there soaked, with a swollen face and stains of dried blood on my shirt.</p> <p>My whole body felt like it was riddled with holes. Every single limb hurt me. My body felt swollen, blue patches of flesh that were hot like fire.</p> <p>I woke up as if from a dream.</p> <p>" Where have I gone in this world? Where are my comrades? Where is my revolver? (1) Has it all been just a dream? "</p>	
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<p>azoy bin ikh opgelegen a gantsn tog un a gantse nakht. a kleyn firekik fentsterl mit ayzerne grates in a vant fun tsimerl, vos iz a shpan di groys. in a vinkl iz gelegn mayn marinarke, a nase un bashpripste mit blut. shver iz mir geven tsu rirn mit a fus oder a hant. di fis zaynen mir gevorn vi shvere, dembene kletser.</p> <p>azoy bin ikh opgelegn tsvey mesles. oyfn dritn tog zaynen gekumen di tsvey merder un hobn mir geheysn oyfshteyn. kh'hob nisht gekent. zey hobn mikh geshturkhet mit di shtivl in bayde zaytn, zeyer frekh gelakht eyner tsum andern, kukndik vi zeyer korb n valgert zikh oyfn nasn tsement un dreyen un ken nisht oyfshteyn.</p> <p>a shtil gebet iz fun mir aroys: shist, shist, shist, shist mikh!</p> <p>a kalt gelekhter, ful mit shpas iz geven der entfere: shisn dikh-iz veynik, du shmutsiker yude! mir veln dir shtikel fleysh shnaydn biz du vest zogn, vu zaynen di banditn, far vemen du host getrogn di medikamentn!</p> <p>a shturkh mitn shtivl in der zayt, velkhe ikh hob shoyn mer nit gefilt. yeder shtikl fleysh oyfn kerper iz shoyn geven vi a vund tseveytikt. -vest zogn vu es gefinen zikh di banditn-partizaner-veln mir dikh fraylozn.</p> <p>ikh entfere nisht un halt farmakht di oygn keday nisht tsu zen</p>	<p>So I lay there for a whole day and a whole night. A small square window with an iron grille was located in one wall of the little room, which was the size of a step (in diameter).</p> <p>In a corner lay my jacket, wet and splattered with blood. It was difficult for me to move a foot or a hand. My feet felt like heavy oak blocks.</p> <p>So I lay there for two days and nights. On the third day, the two murderers came and ordered me to get up. I was not able to do that. They then poked me in both sides with their boots, laughed insolently at each other, watching their victim, who lay on the wet cement, writhing, unable to get up.</p> <p>I said a silent prayer, "Shoot, shoot shoot, shoot me!"</p> <p>A cold laughter, filled with fun, was the answer: "Shooting you would be far too little, you dirty Jew! We will keep cutting pieces of your flesh, until you'll tell us where the bandits are, for whom you carried the medicine!"</p> <p>A push with the boot in the side, which I have no longer felt. Every bit of flesh on my body has already been an aching wound.</p> <p>"If you tell us where the partisan bandits are, we will release you."</p> <p>I don't answer and keep my eyes closed to avoid seeing</p>	
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(1) see page 118: „I handed my revolver to Levit“

<p>di merderishe, royte ponimer. vestu nisht zogn- dan dershishn mir dikh vi a hunt! ikh entfere nisht un vart oyf der koyl mit velkher zey hobn mikh itst gestrashed: akh, halevay shishn zey mikh shoyn! dos volt dokh geven a gute zakh, zikh oyfhern tsu dreyen vi a shlang oyfn nasn tsement. a klap mitn fus un a shpay oyf mir un a geshrey.: Shveyne yude! un mit dem zaynen zey aroys. es hot zikh gehert a klap fun der tir.</p>	<p>those murderous red faces. "But if you don't say anything, we'll shoot you like a dog!" I don't answer and wait for the bullet they have just threatened me with. Oh, if only they would shoot me now! That would be a good thing to finally stop writhing like a snake on the wet cement! I get kicked, they spit on me, and while shouting "Jew pig!" they leave. I hear the door slam shut.</p>	
<p>di tsung brent mir, di lipn fartriknt. keyn bisl shpayekhts iz in moyl nishto. ikh lek op dem nasn tsement mit der tsung, vos iz gevorn vi a bret. in zelbn tog hot mir der vekhter arayngetrogn in a blekhene kendl abisl vaser mit a shtikl farshimlt broyt. dos broyt hob ikh nisht gekont araynleygn in moyl. yeder muskl fun gumen hot geshtokhn vi mit nodlen. dos vaser hob ikh oysgetrunken mit eyn tsi. kh'hob nisht gevust velkher tog fun vokh s'iz un bikhlal tsi s'iz tog oder nakht. oyf morgn nakhn bakumen dos bisl vaser, hob ikh shoyn gekent rirn mit a fus un mit a hant. kh'hob shoyn gevendet di oygn tsum fentsterl un a shtikl bloyer himl hot arayngekukt tsu mir.</p>	<p>My tongue is burning, my lips are parched. There is not a bit of saliva in my mouth. I lick the wet cement with my tongue, which feels like a board. On the same day, the guard brought me a little water in a tin ladle with a piece of moldy bread in it. I was not able to get the bread into my mouth. Every muscle of my palate pricked like needles. The water I drank in one go.  I didn't know what day of the week it was, or even, if it was day or night. After I got the little bit of water the next day, I could already move one foot and one hand. I also looked at the window and saw a piece of blue sky watching me.</p>	
<p>in dem zelbn tog hob ikh zikh shoyn tsugeschart tsu der vant oyf di kni un genumen di marinarke.</p>	<p>The same day, I could already slide on my knees to the wall and take my jacket. In its pocket was a</p>	

<p>in keshene iz gelegn a mashn-tuts (=tashn-tukh?), hob ikh zikh isl (=abisl?) opgevisht dem shveys un dos fartruknte blut fun ponim. ikh hob gepruvt klapn in vant, efsher vet mir emitser fun der tsveyter zayt entfernen. a toyte shtilkeyt hot bloyz gehersht arum mir. dem urteyl hob ikh klor gevust un kh'hob shoyn gevart men zol im oysfirn vos gikher. mayn ayntsiker farlang iz geven, az ikh zol nor onzogn in geto mayn tatn un im shikn oyf mayn ort tsu Levitn, oder mayn bruder zol ahin geyn. in dem zelbn tog, farnakht, hot men mir vider arayngebrakht</p>	<p>handkerchief, with which I could wipe some of the sweat and dried blood from my face. I tried knocking on the wall, maybe someone from the other side would answer me. But all around me I heard only a dead silence. I knew exactly what the verdict would be like and was just waiting for it to be executed as soon as possible.</p> <p>My only desire was that I could just inform my father in the ghetto and send him, or my brother, to "my place" to Levit (1). In the evening of the same day I was brought</p>	
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1) "to my place" = maybe he wanted to send his father or his brother there, to take his place in the partisans.

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<p>abisl vaser un a shtikl broyt. ikh hob gefregt baym vekhter, a polyak, vos far a tog s'iz haynt. er hot mir geentfert, az-freytik. kh'hob im gebetn er zol onzogn in geto vegn mir, ober derfun hot er zikh glaykh opgezogt. oyf morgn, shabes, iz tsugekumen tsum fentsterl fun tir Yakev Kozaltshik (1), velkher iz geven komendant fun der yidisher politsey un hot tsu mir arayngeshrien: -zolst nisht hobn keyn moyre, ikh vel dikh rateven! itst bin ikh shoyn geven zikher, az bay undz in shtub veyst men shoyn fun mayn fartsveyfilter</p>	<p>some water and a piece of bread. I asked the guard, a Pole, what day it was. He answered that it was Friday. I asked him to let them know about my situation in the ghetto, but he immediately refused. On Sabbath morning, Yakob Kozaltshik (1), the then commander of the Jewish police, came to the small door window, and shouted in to me: "Don't be afraid, I will save you!" Now I was sure that they already knew about my desperate situation at home.</p>	
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<p>lage. akh, farvos hob ikh zikh nisht gezegnt mit der mamen un mit di ibrike fun mayn mishpokhe! itst hot mikh Got geshtroft derfar. kh'fil di peynlekhe veytik in di beyner fil shtarker vi nekhtn un eyernehtn.</p> <p>-vu nemt men a revolver?-dos iz mayn ayntsiker gedank. kh'vil shtarbn in kamf tsuzamen mit a merder, a daytsh. ikh veys gut vos mikh dervart, nor eyns bin ikh shtark mit zikh aleyn, vos ikh hob gehat azoyfil kraft un mut oystsuhaltn di shreklekhe klep un nisht tsu reydn keyn vort. zoln zey mit mir ton vos zey viln, der kamf far frayhayt vet vayter for(t)gezetst vern! nokh mit mer akshones un mit mer trayshaft! far yedn korbn veln ot di kalte gazlonishe merder tayer batsoln! un mit dem iz mir laykhter tsu shtarbn.</p> <p>Kh'lig shoyndo in fintstern kartser fir teg. ven nisht dos kleyne fentsterl, volt ikh nisht gekent untershidn dem tog fun der nakht. ligndik azoy oyfn nasn, kaltn tsement, kumen mir farshidene bilder far di oygn. ot ze ikh undzer grupe, vi zey zitsn- di fis unter zikh-un shpieln in kortn. der alter groyer komendant zitst leben oyvn un putst a farzshavert granat. ot ze ikh di daytshishe merder lign mit di ofene meyler un oyfgerisene beykher un zeyere farvundete kukn oyf undz mit oysgeglotste rakhmones-betndike oygn.</p>	<p>Oh, why didn't I say goodbye to my mother and the rest of my family! This was God's punishment for that.</p> <p>I feel the excruciating pain in my bones much more than I did yesterday and the day before.</p> <p>"Where can I get a revolver?" is my only thought. I want to die in battle, together with a German murderer. I know very well what is waiting for me, but I am at peace with myself, because I had strength and courage enough to endure the terrible blows and to remain silent.</p> <p>Let them do what they want to me, the fight for freedom will go on! In fact, with even more determination and even more loyalty! For each victim, those cold, predatory murderers will pay dearly! And in this awareness, it is easier for me to die.</p> <p>I have been lying in the dark detention room for 4 days. Without the small window, I would not be able to distinguish day from night. Lying on the wet, cold cement, various images come before my eyes.</p> <p>Just now I see our group, all sitting cross-legged, playing cards.</p> <p>The old, gray commander sits next to the stove, cleaning a rusted grenade. And now, I see the German murderers lying there with their mouths open and their bodies torn open, staring at us with their eyes wide open, begging for mercy.</p>	
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<p>ot her ikh di geshrayen fun undzere farvundete khaveyrim, vi zey betn zikh mit treyn in di oygn: shist, shist undz!</p>	<p>And there, I hear the cries of our wounded comrades as they plead with tears in their eyes, "shoot, shoot us!"</p>	
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(1) Yakev Kozaltshik/Jakob Kozolchik/ Jakub Kozalczik, „The Hero of Kryunki“, please read: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/jakub-kozalczik-the-hero-from-kryunki-in-block-11/oclc/54611960>

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<p>iz dos alts nisht mer vi a kholem? vi es volt keyn zakh oyf der velt nit geshen? s'dakht zikh mir itst, ligndik do un vartndik a tseblutikter, a tsebrokhener, az ikh leb shoyn azoy lang, lang in fintstern nasn khoyshekh.</p> <p>yeder shorkh vos es hert zikh fun yenezayt ayzerner tir git mir a treysl oyf yeder glid. ot her ikh di shvere shtivl-trit fun di merder. ot ze ikh shoyn vider zeyere royte, mit blut fargosene ponimer, zeyere kalt, shtolenem gelekhter, velkher shtekht adurkh mayn harts un dem gantsn kerper.</p> <p>haynt iz shabes. ikh dermon zikh shabosim fun amol, ven mir flegn zitsn un zikh shpils in zamd freylekhe. lustike-zikh shpils in baheltenishn. un shpeter, shabes nokhn tsholnt, vi mir geyen aroys, farkamte, mit opgeputste shikh, in mark un dreyen zikh arum di kromen, nokhgeyendik meydlekh, velkhe shpatsirn foroyt un farhilkhn di gas mit a freylekh gelekhter. zumer, shabes</p>	<p>Has it all been just a dream? As if none of these things in the world really happened? These thoughts are going through my mind now, as I lie there, bleeding and broken, because for so long, so long a time, I have been living in the wet darkness now.</p> <p>With every rustle that can be heard from the other side of the iron door, every limb of mine shudders. Now, I hear the heavy boot steps of the murderers. And there again, I see their red faces drenched in blood, their cold, steely laughter stabbing through my heart and my whole body.</p> <p>It's Sabbath today! I remember Sabbath days of yore, when we were sitting happily together and playing in the sand, or were funny playing hide and seek. And later, after the tsholent meal on the Sabbath, we went out to the market, (carefully) combed and with polished shoes, and made our rounds around the stores, walking behind girls who walked ahead and made the street resound with merry</p>	
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<p>baynakht- mir geyen oyfn shosey hintern shtetl-meydlekh un yinglekh. undzere tener tsegisn zikh iber di grine felder, velkhe zaynen ibergetsoygn mit a nasn shleyer.</p> <p>ot kumt mir a bild nokh a bild fun yene shabosim un yomim -toyvim, ven undzer shtoltse, heldishe yugnt hot azoy dreyst un mutik marshirt mit bloye bluzn un royte kravatn iber felder un velder un ale zaynen fareynikt unter der royter fon, velkhe hot geflatert in vaytn, bloyem hoykh. kh'bin nokh azoy yung un in mitn blien rayst men mikh op fun di zaftike lebns-vortslen. haynt-ikh un morgn-andere. di tsukunft iz far alemen a gepasknte. eyner iz der oysveg: kemfn un faln vi heldn in shlakht. azoy hot men undz gelernt.</p> <p>kh'vil tsugeyn tsu di ayzerne grades, dos alts aroyfshrayen tsum himl, efsher vet a feygele dertrogn mayn geshray tsu di velkhe veln morgn zayn in der zelber lage vi ikh haynt. der himl vos sheynt arayn durkhn fentsterl vert tunkeler un tunkeler. kh'lig mit di oygn gevendet tsu der arumiker fintsterkeyt.</p> <p>plutsung dernentern zikh vider shvere trit tsu der tir un a klapn fun ayzerne shlislen. di tir hot zikh geefnt un tsvey daytshishe merder zaynen arayn.</p>	<p>laughter. Summertime, Sabbath evening, we are walking on the highway behind the shtetl, lads and lasses. Our sounds pour over the green fields, covered with a wet veil.</p> <p>More and more images come to my mind now of those Sabbath days and the holidays, when our proud, heroic youth marched so boldly and bravely across fields and forests, wearing blue shirts and red ties, and all were united under the red flag that flew in wide, blue heights. I am still so young, and in the middle of my bloom, I am torn away from the juicy roots of life. Today me - and tomorrow others. The verdict on the future is in for everyone, but there is a way out: to fight and fall like heroes in battle. That is how we were taught.</p> <p>I will go to the iron bars of the windows and shout all this to heaven, perhaps a little bird will carry my cry to those, who will be in the same situation tomorrow as I am today. The sky that shines into the window gets darker and darker. I am lying with my eyes turned into the darkness.</p> <p>Suddenly, heavy footsteps approach the door again, and iron keys rattle. The door has opened and two German muderers have entered.</p>	
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<p>-oyfshteyn, ferflukhter yude!- a zets mitn shtivl in rukn. ikh pruv onshtrengen mayne letste bisl koykhes un shtey oyf mit tsiterndike trit. mayn kerper shoklt zikh oyf rekhts un links. ot fal ikh leben der tir. neyn, nisht faln, zikh shtarkn!</p> <p>mit etlekhe shtoyts hot men mikh arayngefirt in kantselarye, vu ikh hob zikh glaykh aruntergelozt fun di fis. a shtrenger, shtekhiker blik iz oyf mir gefaln fun shraybtish, bay velkhn es iz gezesn der leytenant un gehaltn a groysn boygn papir. -oyfshteyn!tsum urteyl- oyshern!-git der leytenant a vildn geshray. Kh'shtreng vider on ale mayne letste kreftn un shtey oyf, ongeshpart in vant. ikh her vi er leyent dem urteyl fun papir:</p> <p>„in nomen des gezetses, dizer undz (und!) dizer numer, vert der yude Soyfer Osher farurteylt fun daytshishe militerishn gerikht tsu der shtrof fun toyt durkh shisn. der urteyl vet vern oysgefirt dizer un dizer datum“. -hostu farshtanen?</p> <p>ikh entfer keyn vort un groyse, shvartse knoyln dernentern zikh tsu mayne oygn. ikh fal tsu der erd. ven ikh hob oyfgemakht di oygn bin ikh vider</p>	<p>"Get up, damned Jew!" - a kick in my back with a boot. I try to muster my last few strength and stand up with trembling legs. My body rocks to the right and left. There, I already fall next to the door.  No, do not fall, gain strength!</p> <p>With several pushes I have been led into the government office, where my legs, immediately, were giving way under me. A stern, piercing look has fallen on me from the lieutenant, who has sat at the desk, holding a large sheet of paper. "Stand up for judgment! Listen!" the lieutenant yells wildly. I again exert all my last strength and stand up, leaning against the wall. I hear him reading the verdict off the paper:</p> <p>"In the name of the law, 'some number', the Jew Soyfer Osher is sentenced by the German military court to the penalty of death by firing squad! The sentence will be carried out on 'some date'. Do you understand?"</p> <p>I don't answer, and large, black balls approach my eyes. I fall to the earth. When I open my eyes again, I have been lying on the wet cement in my dark cell again.</p>	
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<p>gelegn oyfn nasn tsement in mayn fintsterer tsele.</p> <p>tsu morgns, zuntik, bin ikh a gantsn tog gelegn, di oygn gevendet tsu dem shtikl bloyen himl un mayne gedanken zaynen gefloygn vayt, vayt. mayn ayntsiker gedank iz geven ikh zol nit shtarbn vi a lemele, nor shteln a vidershtand, zol afile zayn mit di hoyle hent.</p> <p>farnakht hobn zikh derhert shvere trit un a klapn fun</p>	<p>The next day, Sunday, I lay there all day, with my eyes turned to that patch of blue sky, and my thoughts flew far, far out.</p> <p>My only thought was that I didn't want to die like a little lamb, I wanted to resist, even though I had nothing in my hands.</p> <p>In the evening, heavy footsteps could be heard and the rattling</p>	
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<p>shlislen. di tir hot zikh oyfgemakht un tsvey zshandarn mit di biksn zaynen arayngekumen. -oyfshteyn!-hert zikh a farshikerter kol fun eynem. Kh'shtreng on mayne letste kreftn un shtel zikh oyf mit tsiterndike fis.</p> <p>-aroyts fun kartser, farflukhter shveynt-hunt!-a shtoyts iz gefaln oyf mayn rukn.</p> <p>mit tsiterndike fis bin ikh aroys in hoyf, untern frayen himl.</p> <p>a kil, farnakhtik vintl hot mir a vey geton ibern ponim. Kh'bin shteyn geblibn vi farshikert fun der frisher luft un fun der plutslungdiker helkeyt.</p> <p>di tsvey zshandarn hobn mir tsugetrogn a ridl un geheysn es aroyfleygn oyfn aksl. der toyer hot zikh oyfgemakht un di breyte, puste koshtshyolne gas hot zikh oysgeleygt far mir.</p>	<p>of keys. The door opened and two gendarmes entered with their rifles.</p> <p>"Get up!", the drunken voice of one of them can be heard. With the last of my strength, I stand up on my trembling legs.</p> <p>"Get out of the detention room, you damned bastard!" - A shove is delivered to my back.</p> <p>With trembling legs, I left for the yard, under the open sky.</p> <p>A cool evening wind blew over my face.</p> <p>I stopped, as if drunk by the fresh air and the brightness.</p> <p>The two gendarmes brought me a spade and ordered me to take it on my shoulder.</p> <p>The gate opened and the wide, empty Kościelna (Church) Street spread out in front of me.</p>	
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<p>ikh shtel tsiterndike, kleyne trit in der rikhtung tsum magilnik, vu di zshandarn hobn mikh gefirt. mayn blik falt oyf di farshtelte fentster, velkhe zaynen vi ayngehilt in a toytn-shleyer. kh'gey foroys un ot dakht zikh mir, az ikh fal, di fis brekhn zikh nokh yedn trot. ot ze ikh vi ergets fun a krumlekhn fentster hot zikh a forhang opperukt un a shpits kop fun a mentshn hot aroysgekukt oyf der gas.</p>	<p>I'm walking with shaky, short steps towards the cemetery grounds, where the gendarmes lead me. My gaze falls on the shuttered windows, which look as if they are shrouded in a death veil. Going ahead, I think I'm about to fall, my legs caving in after each step. Right now I see a curtain being pulled open at a crooked window, and a person's pointed head peering out onto the street.</p>	
<p>yeder trot fun di getshveklitete shtivl hot opgehilkht in dem shtumen arum. mir geyen in der rikhtung tsum poylishn besoylem, arop milngas. fun eyn zayt iz der geto-parkan un fun der tsveyter zayt-khurves fun heyzer.</p>	<p>Every step of the nailed boots is echoing in the silent surroundings. We walk in the direction of the Polish cemetery, down Mill Street. On one side, there is the fence of the ghetto, on the other side, ruins of houses.</p>	
<p>ot zaynen mir ibergegangen di brik un ikh fil, az bald bald vel ikh faln oyfn bruk. plutsung her ikh shvere, loyfdike trit hinter mir. mit yeder minut her ikh di trit nenter un nenter. ikh drey oys dem kop un ze a farsopetn, a farshvitstn, mit oysgeglotste, groyse oygn, dem komendant fun geto, Yakev. er geyt tsvishn bayde zshandarn un redt mit zey oyf yidish un halb daytsh.</p>	<p>Just now, we are crossing the bridge and I feel that any moment I will fall on the pavement. Suddenly, I hear heavy, running footsteps behind me. They come closer and closer with every passing moment. I turn my head and see Yakob, the commandant of the ghetto, panting and sweaty, with widened, big eyes. Walking between the two gendarmes, he talks to them in a mixture of Yiddish and German.</p>	
<p>mir tumlt in kop. di shleyfn hakn vi mit shvere hamers un ikh her nisht keyn vort vegn vos zey reydn. kh'shtel nokh langzamere trit.</p>	<p>My mind is spinning. My temples are throbbing like heavy hammers, and I don't understand a word they're talking about. I'm taking even smaller steps.</p>	

*Kościelna Street*



*photos courtesy of Joanna Czaban*

<p>itst yogn mikh shoyn nisht di zshandarn vi frier un mayne oygn zaynen gevendet tsu di aroysgerisene shteyner fun der gas. ot loyft mir farbay an ibergeshrokene hun un varft oyf mir a rakhmonesfuln blik. zi filt mit mayn veytik.</p>	<p>The gendarmes no longer chase me, as they did before, and my gaze is fixed on the ripped-out stones of the road. Just then, a frightened chicken runs past me and looks at me with a merciful glance. It feels my pain.</p>	
<p>ikh varf a blik oyf hinter zikh un ze vi Yakev halt epes in hant un di oygn fun di zshandarn zaynen arayngegrokhn in dem. vos dort kumt for-veys ikh nisht. efsher vegn mayn toytn kerper-az ikh zol nisht lign oyfn poylishn besoylem, oder vegn epes andersh? ot ze ikh shoyn di shteynerne vant fun magilnik(.)</p>	<p>I turn around to the back and see that Yakob is holding something in his hand, which the gendarmes are looking at intently. I don't know what's going on. Maybe it's about my corpse, that it shouldn't lie in the Polish (Christian) cemetery, or is it about something else? I can already see the stone wall of the cemetery grounds.</p>	
<p>di grine beymer shteyen un kukn oyfn farpeyniktn yidishn yat, vos geyt shtarbn azoy shtil un aleyn. ven mir hobn zikh nokh mer dernentert, hot zikh ibern magilnik oyfgehoybn a shvartse khmare fun fliendike kroen, vi zey voltn mikh bagleytn mit a levaye-tants. ot her ikh a geshrayn-links zikh farnemen! kh'bin aroyf oyfn grinem groz leben der shteynerne vant. eyn zshandar iz shteyn geblibn oyfn veg un a tsveyter tsuzamen mit Yakevn zaynen tsugelofn tsu mir un aroysgekapt dem ridl. leben mir iz gevorn a kleyne grub in velkhn Yakev mitn zshandar hobn arayngevorfn etlekhe groyse shteyner fun der vant un</p>	<p>The green trees are standing there, looking at the tormented Jewish lad, who is so quietly and alone going to die there. As we get even closer, a black cloud of flying crows lifts above the cemetery grounds, as if to accompany me with a funeral dance. That's when I hear shouting, "Turn left!" I enter the green grass next to the stone wall.  One of the gendarmes has stopped on the way, and the other, together with Yakob, comes running up to me and grabs my spade. A small pit has formed next to me, into which Yakob and the gendarme have thrown a few large stones from the wall, and</p>	

<p>a geshray hot zikh gehert tsu mir fun Yakevn: du bist geratevet!</p> <p>a shos hot oyfgepralt tsu a bergl frish-oyfgegrobene erd, velkhe iz gelegn tsvishn di grine grozn. der himl iz gevorn badekt mit shvartse kroen. di luft iz ongefilt mit pulver. kh'veys nisht vos do iz fargekumen. ikh shtey ongeshpart in vant un veys nisht tsi ikh leb, tsi ikh gefin zikh untern frish-oyfgegrogenem bergl erd. di tsvey zshandarn zaynen shteyn geblibn oyfn veg un Yakev hot mir geheysn zikh farbahalt'n tsvishn di tseylem biz 12 azeyger banakht. dan vet kumen a mentsh mit a ferd un vogn un me vet mikh avekfin keyn Grodne. ikh tor zikh nisht vayzn in Krinik a lebediker.</p> <p>Yakev tsuzamen mit di tsvey tshandarn zaynen avek tsu der shtot tsu un ikh bin geblibn lign vi in a hinterplet. in kop hot mir</p>	<p>I hear Yakob shouting: "You are saved!"</p> <p>A shot bounces on a small mound of freshly dug earth, which is between the green blades of grass. The sky is covered with black crows, the air is filled with (the smell of) powder. I don't know what has just happened there. Standing leaning against the wall, I don't know if I'm alive or if I'm under the freshly dug mound. The two gendarmes have stopped on the way, and Yakob has ordered me to hide between the crosses until 12 midnight. Then a person with a horse and cart will come and take me to Grodno. I must not show myself in Krynki as a person who stayed alive.</p> <p>Yakob and the two gendarmes went away to the city, and I remained lying as if in agony. It was</p>	
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<p>gehakt vi mit hamers. der gantser kerper hot getsitert far frayd.</p> <p>azoy bin ikh opgelegn biz arum iz gevorn fintster. ikh bin gelegn ayngenyuret mitn kop in groz un hob gevart oyf dem mentshn vos zol kumen mikh nehmen.</p>	<p>pounding in my head like hammers. My whole body trembled with joy.</p> <p>So I lay there until dark, with my head nestled in the grass, waiting for the person to come and get me.</p>	
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<p>zikh oyfheybn un avekgeyn aleyh in vald- iz far mir geven umeglekh. di veytik in gantsn kerper iz mir nokh itst gevorn fil shtarker vi frier. Kh'hob nisht gekent aynshlofn. yeder shorkh fun a foygl oder fun a tsveyg hot mir oysgevizn, az di merderishe daytshn geyen vider tsu mir. plutsung her ikh in der nakhtiker shtilkeyt a klapn fun reder un fun ferdishen trit. leben magilnik iz dos ferd shteyn geblibn un es hot zikh derhert a geshray in der fintsternish: Avrohem!</p> <p>ikh bin gelegn in groz un hob tsu ersht moyre gehat oyftsuheybn dem kop, nor shpeter bin ikh gekumen tsu zikh un geentfert. der balagole iz geven an alter yid, Yitskhok Brevde. ikh bin aroyf oyfn vogn un mir zaynen avekgefor.</p> <p>di nakht hot geglet mayn tseveytikn guf. undzer veg iz geven tsvishn felder, velkhe hobn tsubislekh baruikt mayn gemit.</p>	<p>It was impossible for me to get up alone and go away to the forest. The pain in my whole body had now become much stronger than before. I could not fall asleep. Every rustle of a bird or a branch appeared to me as if the murderous Germans were coming to me again. Suddenly, in the nightly silence, I've heard the tapping of wheels and horses' hooves. Next to the cemetery grounds, the horse has stopped, and a shout is heard in the darkness: "Avromel!"</p> <p>I was lying in the grass and at first, I was afraid to pick up my head, but later I eased up and answered. The wagon driver was an old Jew, Yitzchok Brevde. I got on the cart, and we drove away.</p> <p>The night caressed my aching body. Our way led along between fields, which slowly calmed my mind.</p>	
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