

FIRST PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY

A Streak of Light in a Dark Sky

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Teacher: Katy Radice

Testimony: Rudy Herz

(Dedicated to Rudy Herz, Holocaust survivor who recorded a four-part testimony with the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust)

Rudy, when I heard your horrifying story
It sounded like a plot of fiction
But no sci-fi narrative could be as terrifying
As the barbaric treatment you described

I, a teenage Chinese American
Taking the freedoms of America for granted
Was shocked by your torturous journey
Since, like me, you were a typical 13-year-old
Until your world flipped upside down
Suffering in one concentration camp after another

Your life, a ragged fabric
Slowly shredding day by day
Until a single thread of hope remained
You clung to that thread
While others gave up
You clung to that thread
Dreaming of release

When you were liberated
A bird flown out of a cage
To America, finding your brother
Living a full life, a life of wonder
But never forgetting

The Holocaust, tattooed on your brain
As the number was on your arm
Your story, now on my mind

Is engraved in my soul

We children are your hope for the future
To know, to remember, to prevent
The recurrence of such a historic tragedy
And the sky should never be so dark again