

Writing: 6-8th Grade. 2nd Place.

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I Believe

Dragged by the collar, a man screams for his wife.

He sees his old life fade behind him.

With the new one, the terrible one coming into view.

He is forced to shave his head and wear a criminal's clothes.

His only crime is being a Jew.

While he sits in the bunker next to four others in one tiny bed, he thinks of his old life.

He thinks of his family, now torn apart and gone.

He thinks of his home, so sweet and full of life.

He thinks of his faith.

He thinks, "If G-d loves me so, then why am I here, simply waiting to die?"

He thinks how on Shabbat he would walk, arm in arm with his wife and daughter, to praise

his all loving, all knowing G-d.

He thinks of how they would sing on Friday night, to start the Shabbat meal.

"How happy those times were."

He thinks.

As his eyes slowly drift off into a sleep filled with hunger and sadness, his last thought is,

"This will not be my life."

He will not forget his faith.

He will not forget his family.

He will not forget his home.

He will have hope.

He will not die.

He struggles to survive, doing work fit for ten men, his own failing body doing it alone.

But he sings.

He sings the words of the song he knows so well.

His dry tongue and bright eyes not caring if a soldier will hear.

And if the soldier comes, whip in hand, he will sing his song while he bends over, his back
burning with pain.

And if he once again dragged by his collar, yet this time to something worse.

He will keep singing his song.

Loud and clear while he gets pulled to his death.

The words he will scream so not one person will say they didn't hear.

The words 'Ani Ma'amin' will ring in their ears.
Ani Ma'amin, I believe.

And if his life does end, he still hasn't died.
Because the words still ring.
In my ears, and the ears of many others.
I believe.