

READING

Take This Giant Leap

Sonia Weitz was born in Kraków, Poland. She was 11 years old when her family and other Polish Jews were herded into ghettos by the Nazis. Of the 84 members of her extended family, she and her sister Blanca were the only survivors of years in ghettos and concentration camps during the Holocaust. At an early age, she turned to poetry to help her cope with her emotions. Years after the Holocaust, Weitz wrote the poem "For Yom Ha'Shoah." *Yom Ha'Shoah* is Hebrew for "Day of Holocaust Remembrance."

Come, take this giant leap with me
into the other world . . . the other place
where language fails and imagery defies,
denies man's consciousness . . . and dies
upon the altar of insanity.
Come, take this giant leap with me
into the other world . . . the other place
and trace the eclipse of humanity . . .
where children burned while mankind stood by
and the universe has yet to learn why
. . . has yet to learn why.¹

¹ Sonia Schreiber Weitz, *I Promised I Would Tell* (Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves, Inc., 2012), 66.

Connection Questions

1. What does this poem mean to you? What questions does it raise for you?
2. Sonia Weitz has been called “a survivor with a poet’s eye.” How can poetry deepen one’s study of the Holocaust? What can we learn from poetry that more traditional historical accounts might not capture?
3. Re-read the poem and highlight the verbs Weitz uses. How do the verbs help to intensify her description of “the other world”?
4. Do you think that Weitz believes it is possible to understand the horrors of the Holocaust? What can we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust?