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NOTES ON MY FREE VERSE POEM: I have chosen to honour the members of the Oneg Shabbat archive; a secret underground archive in the Warsaw ghetto which included letters, diaries, poems, and documents compiled by Jewish prisoners.

Yizkor is a Jewish memorial prayer sung for the dead.

THEY WILL SING OUR YIZKOR

when the time comes,
the world will know -
the world will sing our yizkor

they'll know of the soldiers:
our brothers fighting in the streets
they'll know of the soup kitchens:
our sisters fighting against starvation

and they'll remember us
for our resistance
and our stories

we were cheated out of the control of our own history
but we wrote it anyway
we were taunted by Death
but we didn't stay silent

we whispered our memories in the dark
and to our god
our stories were carved in the walls of our prison
trapped in the hearts of our people
carried in the very silence of the Warsaw air

we poured our stories into rusted milk cans
musty crates
unassuming suitcases
buried
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within the earth

we condemned our murderers
and hid the proof of our existence

we interviewed our brothers and sisters: the fighters
but we did not fight ourselves
at least not with sticks or stones

we tried to unravel the tangled strings of our fate
we wrote about our pain
our hunger for freedom

and although the scarlett skies seethed with fire
their smoke twisted through our land
and the rivers ran red
the world knew what our murderers had done

to the living, we are gone
but our memories have been told

tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
we soar above the webs of hate
today and forevermore

the world will sing our yizkor