

*Second Prize – Isabelle Walker*

I don't know where I am. I hope you are OK. I can't sleep. I found another 10 year old. He's alone too. I know you probably won't read this but I want to at least believe you can hear me when I say this....I love you and I know I will see you soon.

There is a man on the bunk below me and he keeps giving me bits of his food but it's not helping. My stomach doesn't roar any more because it has no energy to. That's what the man said. My Friend. He's called Michael we share the same bunk. I have scratches all on my hand from the wood but my top is too big for my hands to be protected. I had to go and get my pants sewn because they were falling down.

I have worked all day everyday and I'm really really tired. I think it's my birthday soon because it's really cold and my birthday is in winter. I hope I see you but I don't think I will.

I had the worst day ever yesterday. It was horrible. There was an older man who was really tired from working and hungry. He wanted a sit down. He started crying and then collapsed. The guards weren't very happy and before I could look away and before I could think to help they shot him. I heard him beg and scream...it was too late. I wanted to help but what can a 10 year old do against people who have no heart, people who have no soul. They would kill me too.

Lots of people across from my bunk disappeared yesterday. We thought they were going to get a shower but they still haven't returned. I think I know what happened but I don't want to believe it.

I had a dream last night. Not about what I usually dream about. Not about finishing school and getting a job or about my family when I grow up. Not about the house I will buy my wife. The many toys and fun my children will have. No my dream was about how one day I will get out.

I will see you. I know I will. I had to march out of this camp today. Anyone who fell was shot. I had to help Michael stay standing because we were walking for hours. Everybody is calling it a death march.

I'm scared.

I don't know what to do, how to survive.

I love you so much. I always have and always will.

Goodbye....I will see you soon. I hope. I want you to have hope too. Hope that one day, maybe soon, maybe in 10 years, we will see each other. I promise. Cross my heart, please.

I love you. From your son, who will never give up and will survive.