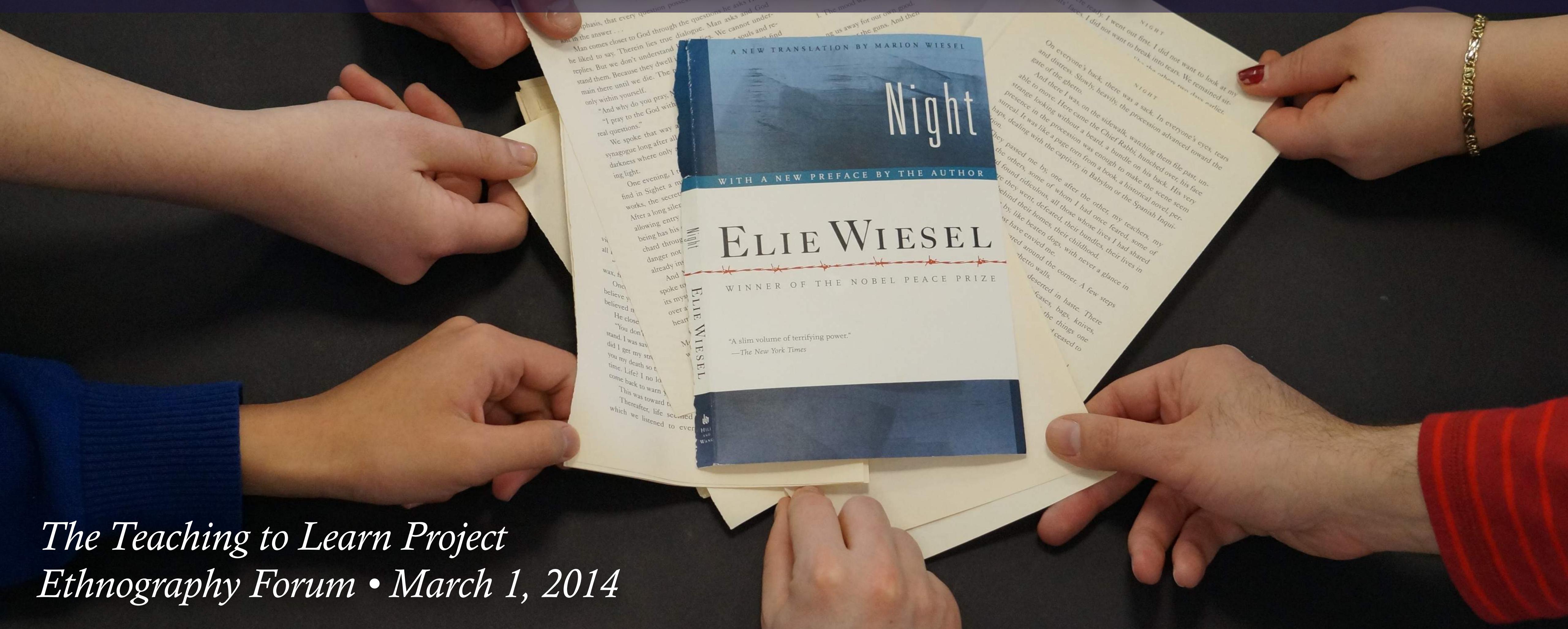


# “In the Swell of Wandering Words”

## *The Arts as a Vehicle for Adolescents' and Educators' Inquiries into the Holocaust Memoir Night*



*The Teaching to Learn Project  
Ethnography Forum • March 1, 2014*

# Prologue

## *“Speak, You Also”*

*Speak, you also,  
speak as the last,  
have your say,*

*Speak-  
But keep yes and no unsplit,  
And give your say this meaning:  
give it the shade*

*- Paul Celan*



HIER WOHNTE  
JAKOB MEIER  
JG. 1880  
DEPORTIERT  
AUSCHWITZ  
ERMORDET

HIER WOHNTE  
FANNY MEIER  
GEB. BERGHEIMER  
JG. 1889  
DEPORTIERT  
AUSCHWITZ  
ERMORDET

bear witness for the witness?" He was not th

There were other writers who committed suic

writers in particular, because they felt their w

paltry. Writers have nothing but words, and th

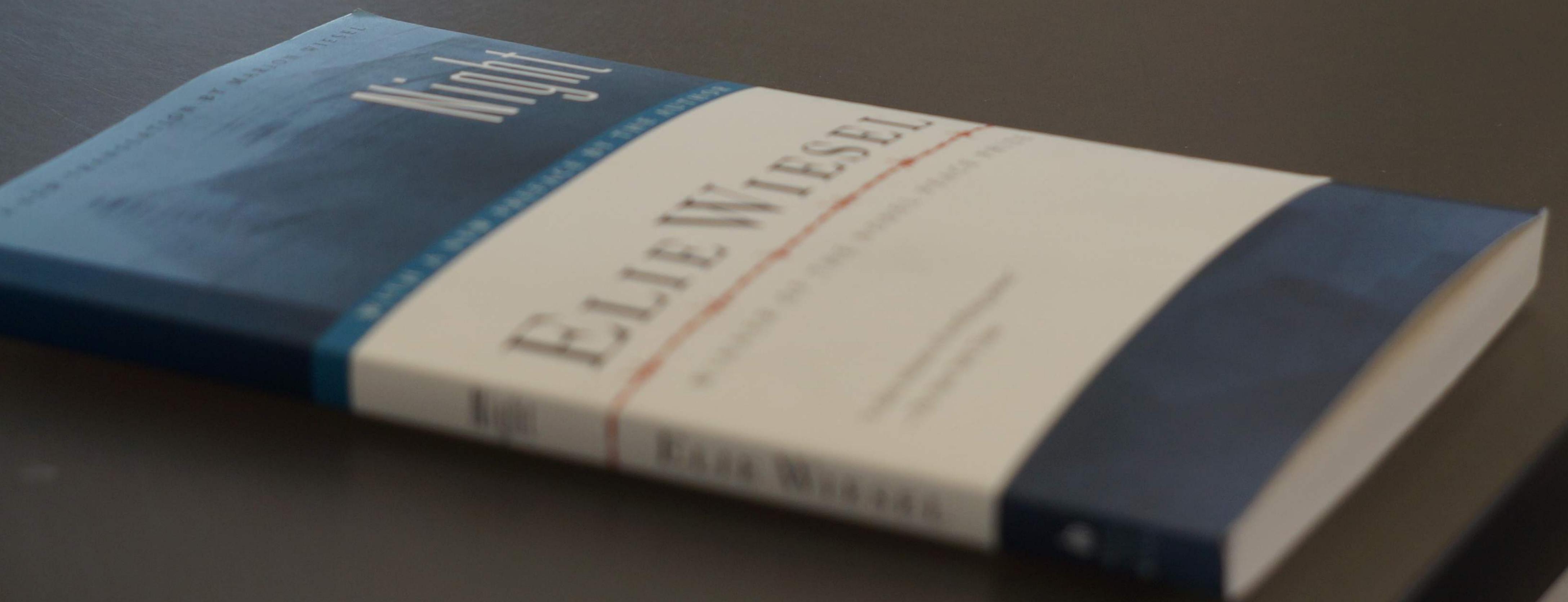
that there are no words for this tragedy. There

stones and there are people who come to be in

stones. The despair of the writers who commit

suicide must serve as a warning that remains a

# Act I: The Book







Why would God

Allow This To Happen?

The Night Trilogy



You ask many important questions, in answer: Even in the camps I never lost my faith in God. However, I protested against God's silence. Yes, I still believe in God, but my faith is a wounded faith. The reason I was able to survive was because of my father's love and sacrifice for me. I have a son and we are very close. I believe indifference is a sin. Those who stood idly by are also responsible for what happened. I don't believe in collective guilt. Only the guilty are guilty – the child of a Nazi is not a Nazi but a child.

Knowing that you and your classmates will never forget the tragedies of the past fills me with hope. You can use your knowledge and understanding to educate those who are unaware. You and your classmates can make a difference in creating a new kind of century.

Keep learning and reading, more and more.

With best, best wishes to all of you –





# Act II: Call for Action



VIESE

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more than

ook with a step forward I  
d my mother where he is now  
prefer him.

was the best  
way to the better  
and more

the best  
and more

Why W





# The Night Trilogy

5

6



# Act III: Creating Art



# Kennzeichen für Schutzhäftlinge in den Konzentrationslagern

	Politisch	Berufsverbrecher	Emigrant	Bibelforscher	Homo-sensual	Arbeitsscheu Reich	Arbeitsscheu
Grundfarben	Red	Green	Blue	Maroon	Orange	Black	Black
Abzeichen für Rückfällige	Red	Green	Blue	Maroon	Orange	Black	Black
Strafkomp.	Red	Green	Blue	Maroon	Orange	Black	Black
Juden	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Black	Black
Jüdischer Rassenschänder	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Black	Black
Fluchtverdächtiger	Red	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black
Beispiel: Politisch, Jude, Rückfällig, Strafkomp.	Red	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black
Pole	P	T					
Sonder-Aktion Wehrmacht							
Tscheche							
Ja Häftling							





קלילע



... we're not good at this. Go on.  
Being only, we're always in the style.  
But when we work it better, we're  
able to see.

How did he move? So his eyes were closed  
More easily this was his

'When'

thought on  
from behind them

Finally, we refused him, squashed

11

19

20

that's when they found death in SS

He showed it to her

was he in his or her. All I could think of

He showed me his

'I'm sorry about

'I'm sorry'

'I'm sorry, I'm sorry'

'I'm sorry'

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

it like all me and my big

sisters. If

I shall stay with your mother

and the little one ...

Finally, we refused him, squashed

it like all me and my big

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I shall stay with your mother

and the little one ...

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0000032001145

ed unable to restore order, no avail. Some prisoners even to stand, sat down at once. He was sitting down die night here . . . from which protruded

... Have pity on  
showers.

You'll  
and end

that we would

You will kin



more work. If you don't you will go straight to the  
the combustion. Work or combustion—the choice.  
We had already lived through a life that might  
nothing could frightened us anymore. But his heart  
was through us. The word "charney" here was not  
it floated in the air, mingled with the smoke. It was  
only word that had a real meaning in this place,  
dark. The Kapo arrived, shouting.

"All speculate—lockerooths, fayemans, or  
makers—come step forward!"

The rest of us were transferred to yet another  
of rows. We had permission to sit down. A GPO  
charge.

My father suddenly had a stroke attack. He  
politely as German, "Excuse me . . . Could you  
tell me am I located?"

The Gypsy stared at him for a long time, to  
if he wished to ascertain that the person addressed  
sly a creature of flesh and bone, a human being  
a body. Then, as if waking from a deep sleep,  
that with such force that he fell down and then  
his place on all fours.

I stood petrified. What had happened to my  
just been jerked, in front of me; and I had not even  
watched and kept silent. Only yesterday, I was  
told, that criminal's flesh. Had I imagined that  
Romanus began to grow at me? All I could think was  
forgive them for this. My Father must have guessed  
because he whispered in my ear:

"It doesn't hurt." His cheek still bore the red

there was still time. We decided that if we were allowed until the Liberation, we would not stay another day in Haifa. We would travel the first ship to Haifa.

Still lost in his Catholicistic dreams, Akiba Drumer had drawn a verse from the Bible which, translated into numbers, made it possible for him to predict Redemption in the weeks to come.

"After your meal, you'll go to see the doctor." "But . . . I don't have a mother . . ." "After your meal. Without fail."

ing from the platform, asking him to have the next window to a hospital car.

"Patients," the Yeshiva replied, "patients. You'll be taken care of."

And about midnight, the rain began to pour again. We all quitted the station. The storm was rolling steadily. A few minutes later, it began to howl down upon us. At the windows, we saw lightning-wis; we listened to the roar of the tempest.

But Religious Mrs. Schlesinger's entrance, festive and smiling, brought a smile to the faces of the Red Cross workers.

"Look at the Red! Look at the Green!"

At the noon supper, they said we saw them in the snow, a black dog.

The dog had fallen silent at her voice. More than once she returned to her camp.

Flowers in the afternoon. A white rose, a red rose, a yellow rose, a blue rose, a pink rose, and black petals.

Light and smoke, they began to burn.

They were burning everything inside. Heavy smoke, and at Mrs. Schlesinger. Flowers.

They were burning everything outside. In the air, the smell of smoke, the taste of smoke, the taste of smoke.

At around midnight. We had eaten.

at so Grymes had come to put our guard. The chinks were crackling around me. My feet were moving as usual to protect myself from the blows to falling feathers. It was spring. The sun was shining. I live by that!

Others I had glimpsed that morning were working hard in sight, only the chimney's shadow. I called out and my doubts. I felt someone pulling at my sleeve. "Come on, son."

Guns opened and closed. We continued across the barbed wire. At every step, white signs were broken down at us. The inscription intended? What irony. Was there here a single place where a danger of death?

Men had stopped next to a barn. They were men, who encircled us with machine guns.

I had heard half an hour. Looking up, the barbed wire was behind us. We were safe.

A beautiful day in May. The fragrance of the earth was setting.

How long had we taken a few more steps, the sound of another camp. This one however, I recognized: sweet, happy, etc.

You probably don't know you're buying a new car. Until, that is.

... buy something, some kind of even time  
moment in time off that deserved to get off. All  
of us are kinds of stale today. The kind of stop-  
time life. I try nothing but a study. Perhaps even  
enough. The workload alone was enormous.

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table, looking down at a book or document they are both holding. The man is on the left, wearing a dark shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored top. They appear to be in a library or study room.

“Look, the Kapo . . . the young Jewish boy . . . mad, mean  
now.”

After the study, a beautiful woman with dark hair and a white blouse was waiting outside. "I'm sorry," she said, "but I have to leave now. I'll be back later." She turned and walked away.





וַיָּלֹן שָׁם בְּרֵבָה הַשְׁמֶשׁ וַיַּחֲזִקֵּן מִאָבִיו נְקָדָם וְלָבָם  
כִּי מִרְאֵשָׁתְּנִי וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּפְּקוּם הַרוֹא: וַיַּחַלְמֵן וַיַּחֲלֹם סָלָם

הַרְאֵץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שָׁכַב עָלָיו לֹא אַתָּה וְלֹא תָּאֵשָׁה:  
וְהַיְהֵי וּרְאֵךְ בְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וְפָרָצָת יְמֵה וְנִסְרָפה  
מִרְאֵשָׁתְּנִי כַּאֲמָתָה פְּנַנְתָּה לְרֹאֵת כַּאֲמָתָה לְלֹא  
יָרַאָתָה בְּלֹא כַּאֲמָתָה לְלֹא כַּאֲמָתָה לְלֹא כַּאֲמָתָה לְלֹא כַּאֲמָתָה

10] Jacob left Beer-sheba, and set out for Haran. 11] He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. 12] He had a dream; a stairway was set on the

13] And he said, "My God, if Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. 15] Remember, I am with you: I will protect you

16] And he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven." 18] Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of

19] And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

10] Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it, and he called its name Bethel; and to this day it is called Bethel. 11] And Jacob said, "This place is indeed God's house, and this is indeed His gateway to heaven." 12] And Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it, and he called its name Bethel; and to this day it is called Bethel.

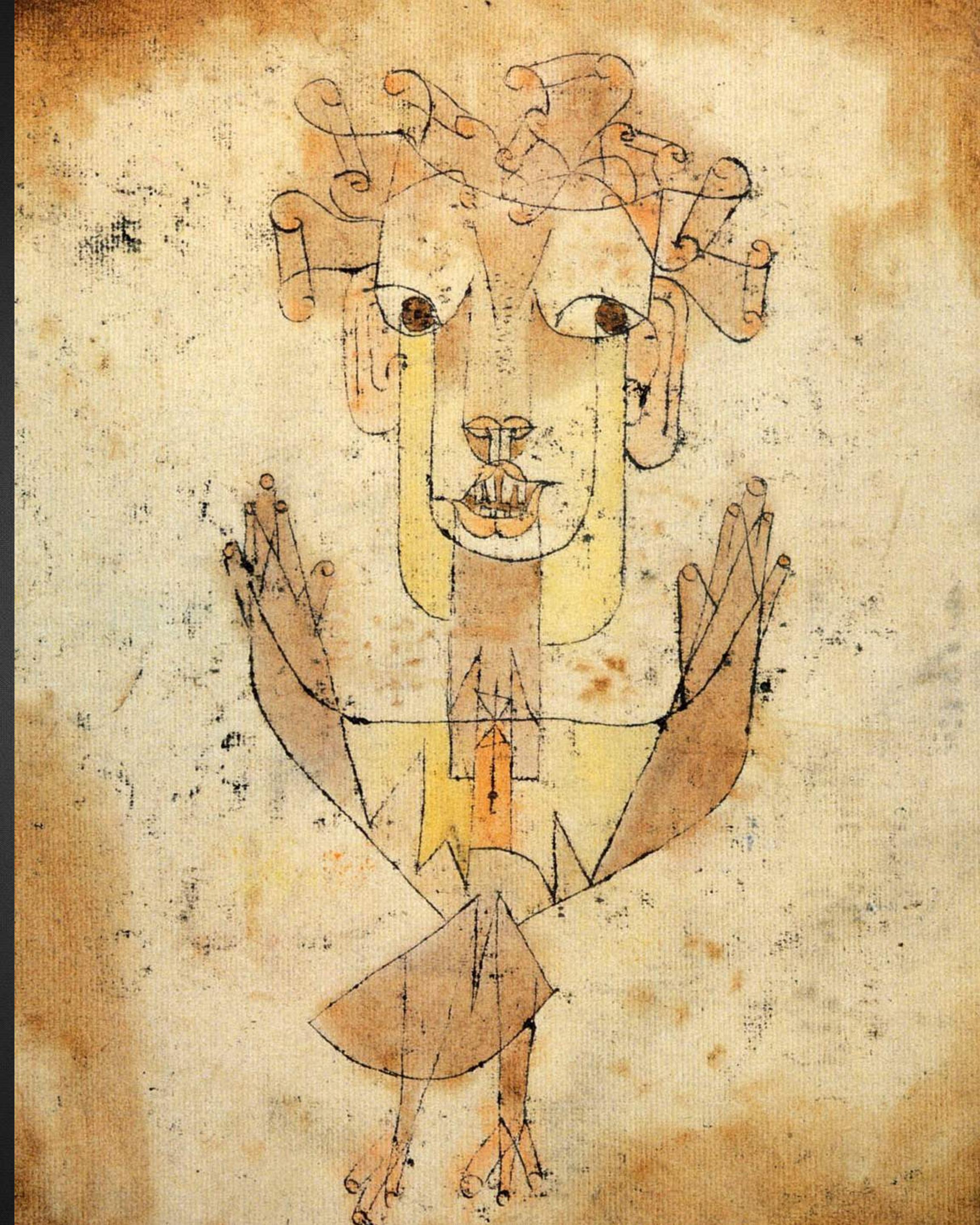
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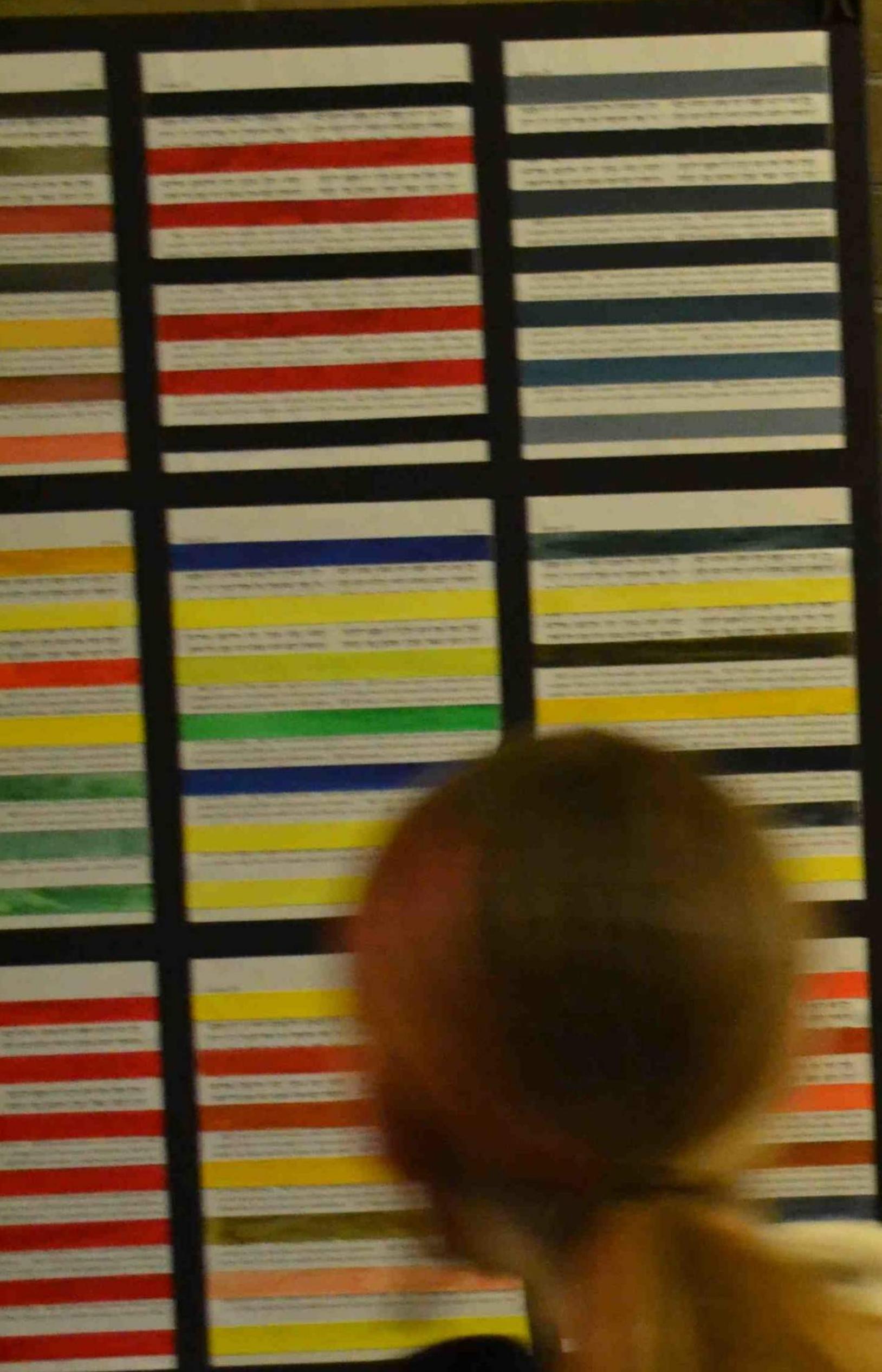
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# Act IV: Reaching the Public



One of the themes in Nagy's letters to participating students related to faith. In letters youth exchanged with Professor Meier, they asked, "Why would God allow this to happen?" In the letter he wrote in response, Dr. Meier described his experience of faith in Auschwitz:

Even in the camp I never lost my faith in God. However, I protested against God's silence. Yes, I still believe in God, but my faith is a wounded faith.

To explore the idea of faith, we invited students to consider the critical account David Gutmann writes of his own religious journey. Christianity and Islam, he writes, are "theologies of the self," based on identity, humility, and the search for meaning.





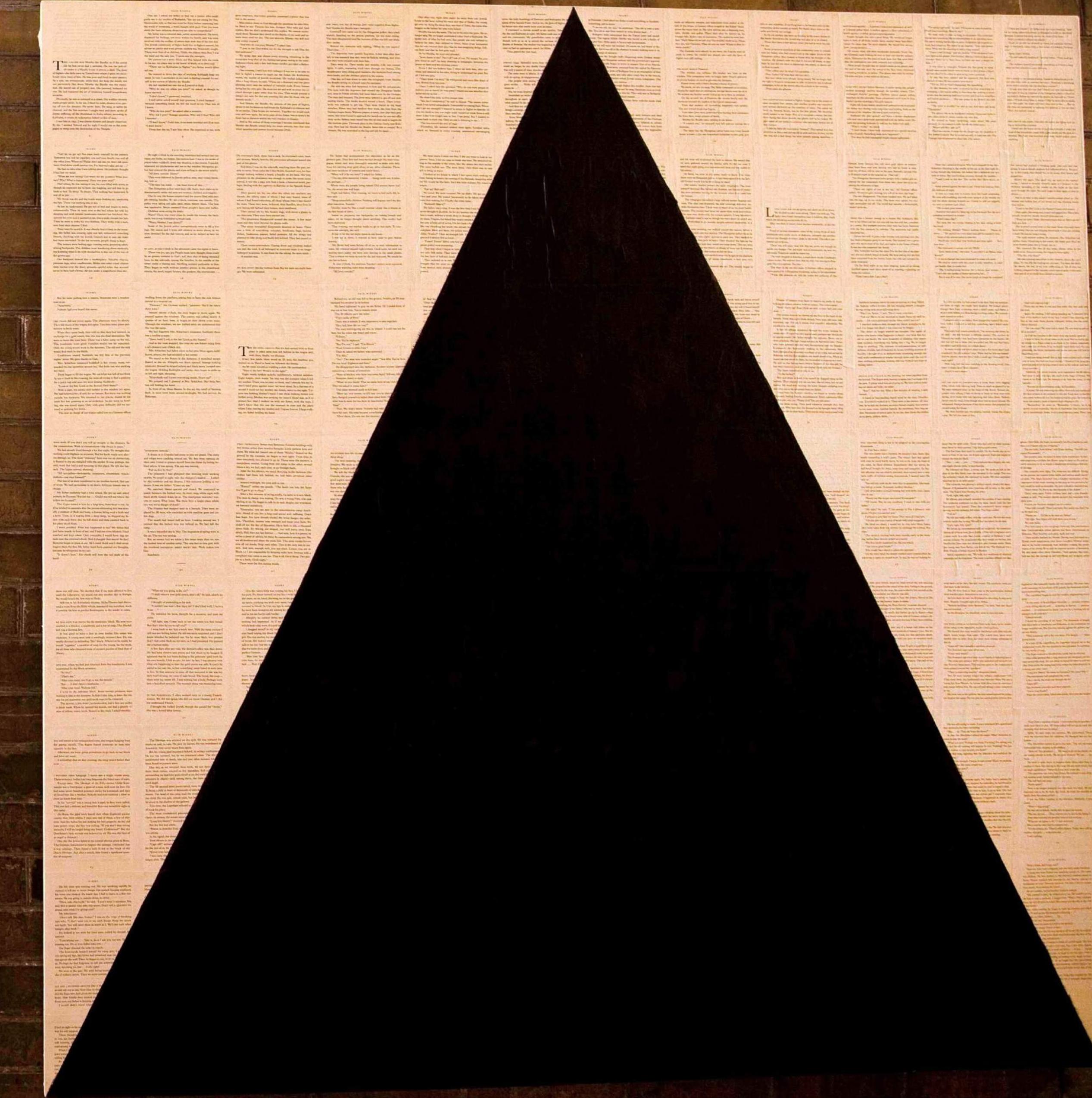
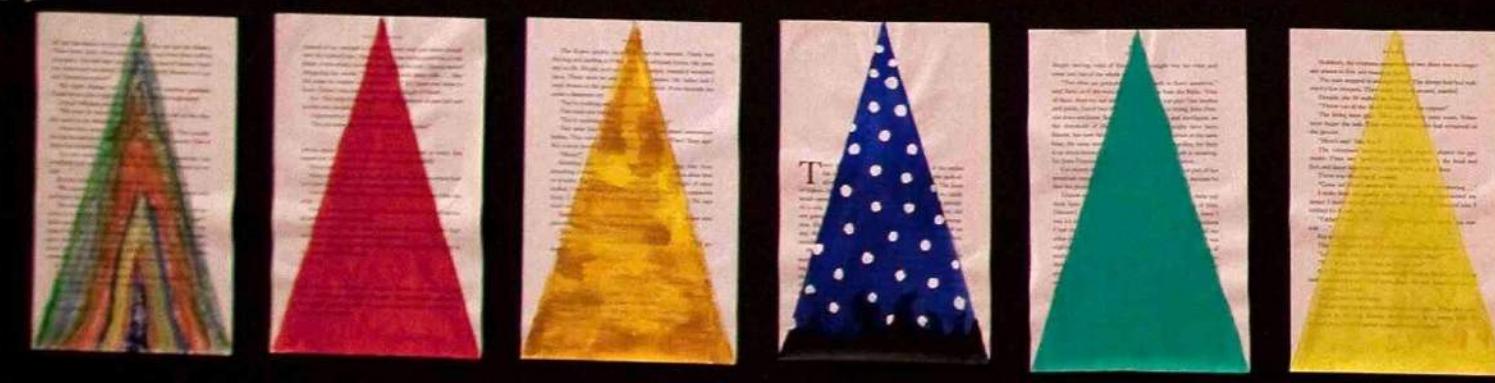
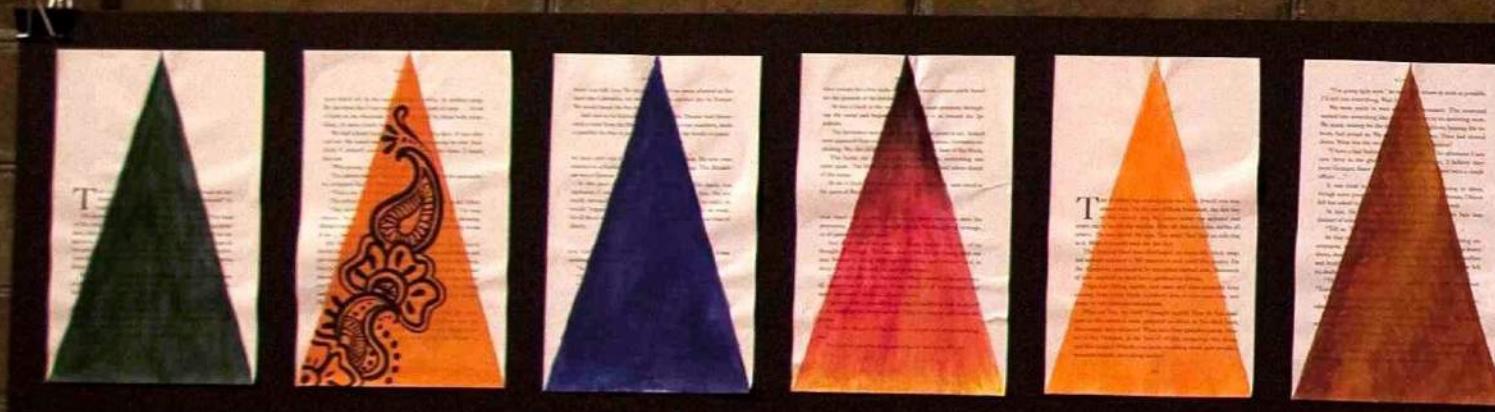
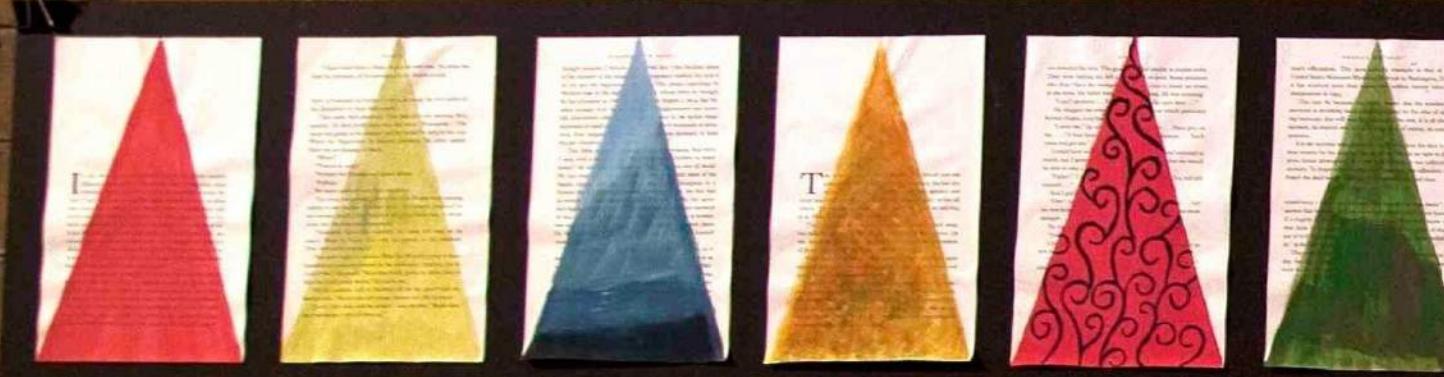
These paintings respond through color and symbol to themes in the Holocaust memoir *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Rob Simon, a University of Toronto/OISE professor, and members of The Teaching to Learn Project—teachers, graduate students, and teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching Program at OISE—collaborated with adolescents from West Toronto to author curriculum for *Night*, write narrative responses, and exchange letters with Professor Wiesel. These paintings on pages from Wiesel's text represent the culmination of their work together.

This exhibition is a collective response to Wiesel's testament of his experiences in the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps from 1944 until his liberation in 1945 at 16. The state-sponsored genocide of 6 million Jews, along with millions of others deemed "undesirable" by Hitler's regime—including homosexuals and individuals with disabilities, Roma and Jehovah's Witnesses—is well documented. Published in English in 1960, Wiesel's account of the Nazi death camps is one of the most significant documents of, and artistic responses to, the Holocaust.









# Epilogue



One day when I was walking  
his path, the master happened to come along.  
He stopped me, put his hand on  
the chest, on my head, then bent over and took  
up again, crushing me under his hands  
covered in blood. As I bit my lips in silence  
he must have mistaken my silence for defiance and was  
used to hit me harder and harder.

Abruptly, he calmed down and sent me back to work as if  
nothing had happened. As if we had taken part in a game in  
which both roles were of equal importance.

I dragged myself to my corner. I was aching all over. I felt a  
cool hand wiping the blood from my forehead. It was the French  
girl. She was smiling her mournful smile as she slipped me a crust  
of bread. She looked straight into my eyes. I knew she wanted to  
talk to me but that she was paralyzed with fear. She remained like  
that for some time, and then her face lit up and she said, in almost  
perfect German:

"White sister lips, little brother . . . Don't cry. Keep your anger  
for another day, for later. The day will come, but no  
sooner. A day to be patient and wait . . ."





DURING THE HOUR that followed nobody said a word. They were all thinking of David ben Moshe. David was not alone in his death cell; his friends were with him, except me. I did not think of David except when they pronounced his name. When they were silent my thoughts were out, to someone else, to a man I did not yet know, any more than I knew David, but whom I was fated to know. My David ben Moshe had the name and face of an Englishman, Captain John Dawson.

We sat around the table and Ilana served us some steaming tea. At some time we sipped it without speaking. We looked into each other's liquid in our cups as if we were searching in it for the meaning of our silence and the meaning of the events which had brought us there. "Then, in order to kill time, we spoke of our stories of them that centered on death."

"A sum of my life," Job began.  
"A sum of my innocent, tormented face, dark, confused  
and perpetually in the service of that of an old man. He wore a perpetu-

DAWN

"How is it natural? Of what concern is the killing of John Dawson to you?"

"You are the sum total of all that we have been," said the youngster who looked like my former self. "In a way we are the ones to execute John Dawson. Because you can't do it without us. Now do you see?"

I was beginning to understand. Not yet so obscure as that of formed him. In murdering a man I was making them murderers.

"Well," said the boy. "Go on."

"Yes, I see," I said.  
"Poor boy, poor boy!" murmured my mother whose lips were

"HE'S HUNGRY," said Gideon.

I had not heard him come back up the stairs. Ghosts have a disconcertingly noiseless way. They walk, talk, eat, and pray, all without making a sound.

"Impossible," I protested.

He can't be hungry, I was thinking. He's going to die, and a man who's going to die can't be hungry.

"He said so himself," Gideon insisted, with a shade of emotion in his voice.

Everyone was staring at me. Luna had stopped crying. ghosts too seemed to be expecting something of me, perhaps, or a cry.

"Does he know?" I asked Gideon.

"Yes, he knows," And after a moment he added,

"How did he react?"  
It was important for me to know the re-



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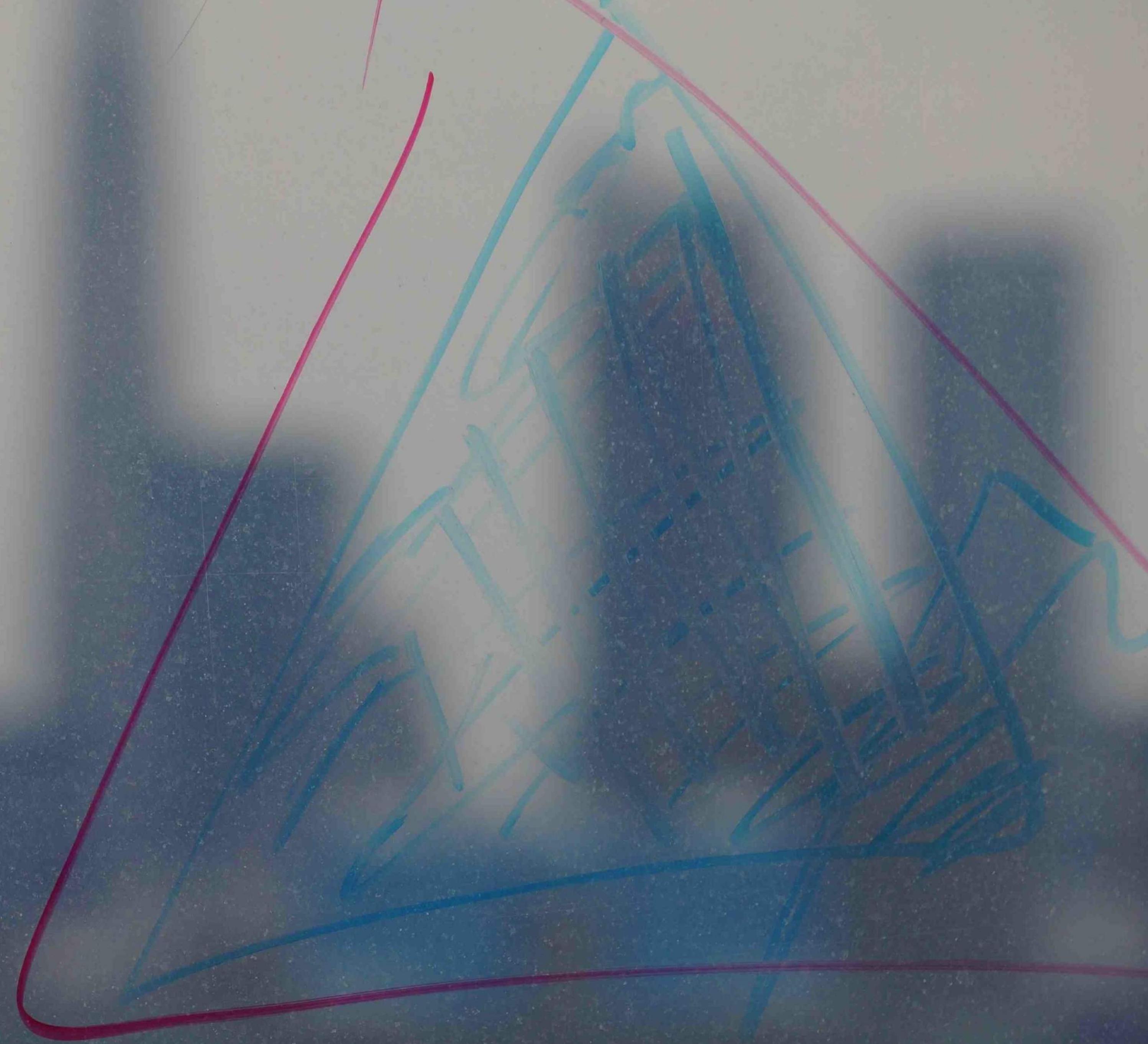
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I pinched myself: Was it possible that we were being burned and that All this could not be real. [My father] didn't answer. Everybody was shaking. Someone began to recite Kali

~~Afrt:~~



*"I only know that without this  
testimony, my life as a writer—  
or my life, period—would not  
have become what it is:  
that of a witness who believes  
he has a moral obligation to  
prevent the enemy from enjoying  
one last victory by allowing  
his crimes to be erased from  
human memory."*

*— Elie Wiesel*

"Get up! You must ready yourself for the journey. I will be expelled. And your family, you and all here to? Please, sir, don't ask questions. I could answer you. For heaven's sake, get up . . ." He probably thought

saying "I'm not mad?" Journey? What journey is he on?"

He was filled with terror, as he told him to go and see what had happened. It

... game, paralyzing

and I was bound from the morning, evening, and night, consoling myself the Jewish way, by the order of God. For the last year now, there is no hope.

where hunting was, probably, the chief occupation.

**T**HE BELOVED OBJECTS that we had carried with us from place to place were now left behind in the wagon and, with them, finally, our illusions.

Every few yards there stood an SS man; his machine gun trained on us. Hand in hand we followed the throng.

An SS came toward us wielding a club. He commanded:

**“Men to the left! Women to the right!”**

Eight words spoken quietly, indifferently, without emotion. Eight simple, short words. Yet that was the moment when I left my mother. There was no time to think, and I already felt my father's hand press against mine: we were alone. In a fraction of a second I could see my mother, my sisters, move to the right. Tzipora was holding Mother's hand. I saw them walking farther and farther away; Mother was stroking my sister's blond hair, as if to protect her. And I walked on with my father, with the men. I didn't know that this was the moment in time and the place where I was leaving my mother and Tzipora forever. I kept walking, my father holding my hand.

"God saved me from death.  
We called Gideon the Slave,  
second because he looked like  
a fellow some twenty years old,  
unobtrusive and was always in  
the background. He had a  
double chin and side curls, went nowhere  
without a coat, and was  
His father was a rabbi, and when  
he became a terrorist he gave him  
a father said, when words and  
silence are also the God of war,  
words.

"God saved me from death. He saved me. I too was arrested and they forced matches under my fingernails to make me confess that I had killed him. They beat me until I lost the life of the High Commissioner. They beat me so much that I could not talk. More than once I wanted to commit suicide. I was quiet because I felt that God's grace had saved me. I said to myself, and I mean it, 'I will never stop shouting, but I will shout in His eyes, which are drawn to me.' They finally had to set me free. I am still here, I am still alive."

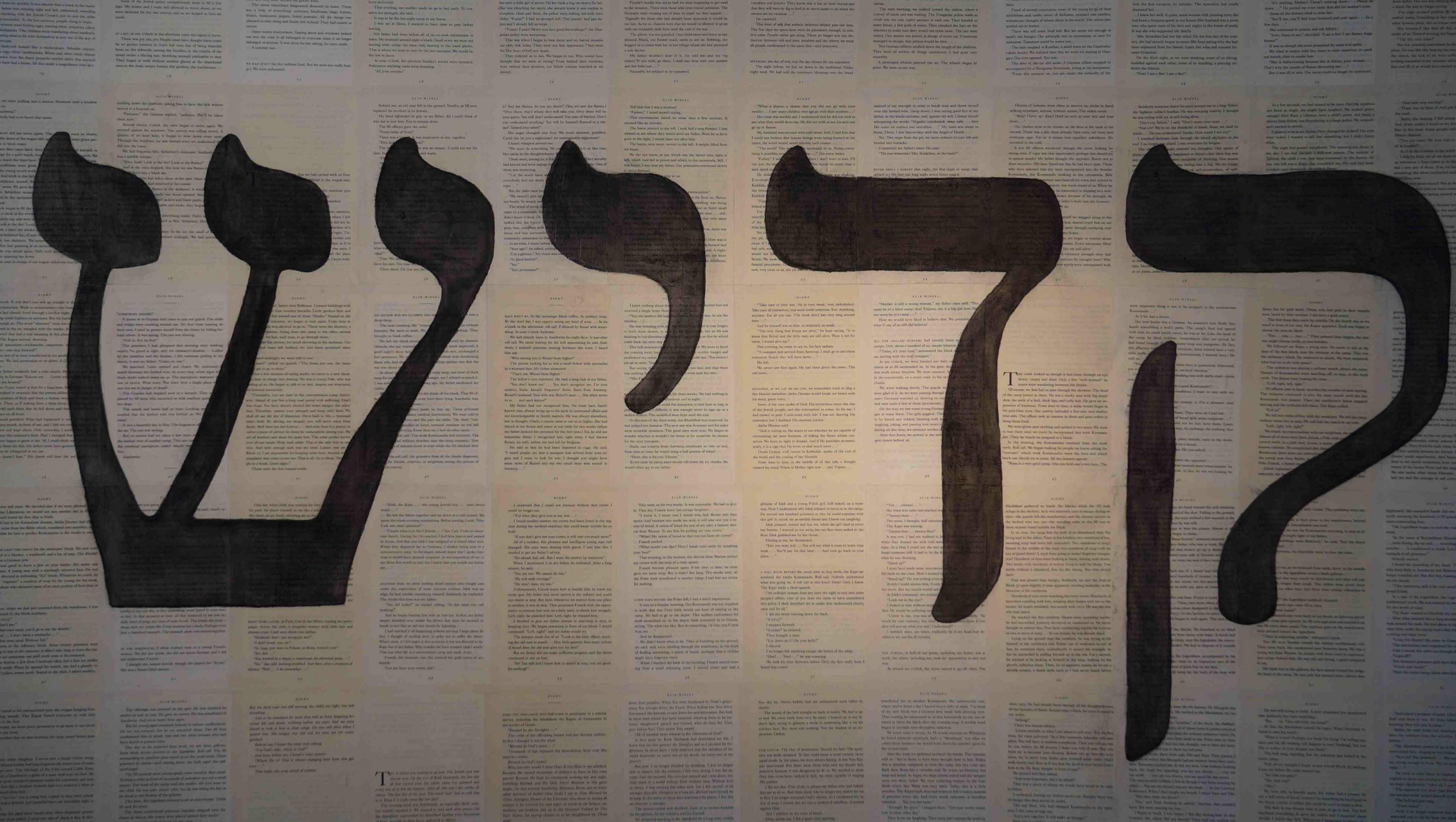
"And then," I put in, "God  
Hana refilled our cups.

"What about you, Ilana?" I ask.  
"A cold in the head," she replies.

I burst out laughing, but nervous and artificial.

"A cold in the head?" I repeated.





# The End/The Beginning

AFTER NIGHT

"NEVER SHALL I FORGET that night, the first night in the camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed."

- Elie Wiesel

These paintings respond through color and symbol to themes in the Holocaust memoir *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Rob Simon, a University of Toronto/OISE professor, and members of The Teaching to Learn Project-teachers, graduate students, and teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching Program at OISE-collaborated with adolescents from West Toronto to author curriculum for *Night*, write narrative responses, and exchange letters with Professor Wiesel. These paintings on pages from Wiesel's text represent the culmination of their work together.

This exhibition is a collective response to Wiesel's testament of his experiences in the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps from 1944 until his liberation in 1945 at 16. The state-sponsored genocide of 6 million Jews, along with millions of others deemed "undesirable" by Hitler's regime—including homosexuals and individuals with disabilities, Roma and Jehovah's Witnesses—is well documented. Published in English in 1960, Wiesel's account of the Nazi death camps is one of the most significant documents of, and artistic responses to, the Holocaust.

