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Destination

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Destination

Avi Ben Basat

She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock. She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her. Though she had no idea what lay ahead, her stick acted as her eyes. The determination and rhythm in her steps showed she knew where she wanted to be. The steadily falling snow immediately erased each of her prints as soon as her foot picked up to walk the next inch. Despite these conditions, she would surely reach her destination soon.

It had been three months since she had been liberated from the camp and she still could not get used to eating a full meal. Whenever she put more than a couple of bites into her mouth, she began to feel sick. Even though her prayers had been answered, she felt dead just the same. Her soul had died the moment she accepted her fate and climbed aboard the cattle train. When she saw people in droves, packed amongst each other in complete silence, she knew it was the end. She was the only one of her whole family who survived, which was ironic and odd. This made her question G-d's judgment even more, for why would He save her from among so many who had not even begun their lives, those who had much more to live?

She felt she could not go on living like this. What was the point? To be alone, barely able to take care of herself, with the knowledge that all those she held dear had departed from this earth, was far worse than death. So she continued to walk deeper and deeper into the uninhabitable, frozen forest. After she became completely unfamiliar with the ground around her, she knew she had reached the point of no return. She then dropped her cane and slowly made her way down to the ice-covered land to lie down in the cold. She reached into her pocket and picked up a picture which she kissed right before she closed her eyes. A tear froze before reaching the end of her cheek. She had finally found her freedom.