

The German soldier described below also appears in Joan DaSilva's narrative which covers events, in chronological order, over the course of the war years in Poland. The soldier is shown here, in a separate story, portraying the author's feelings toward him and all the German soldiers she met, who never recognized her as a Jew.

The German Soldier Who Had To Die

Authored by Joan Da Silva Sacks

How are you there my friend? Do you remember how many times we crossed each other's path but in the end, you didn't recognize me? No, you didn't recognize me. We sat so close looking into the same mirror, but you never knew. You had blue eyes, and you were young, and so fair. Your face was lean and angular and your jaw so taut and firm. You were shaving, and I leaned over your shoulder and watched as you lifted the light brown foamy bristle from around your mouth and chin. Your eyes were so soft and your lips thin but gentle. You were telling me such lovely stories about a little girl you had at home who was like me. And I watched in wonder, and I let my eyes fall all over your wavy brown hair and your white shirt and then settle again on your face. Yes, now I remember you had packed your clean white shirt and put it on for the occasion. Your hands too, were lean and young like the rest of you and you held a razor in such a manly fashion, I thought. My mother later told me that you knew you were going to die. That's why you took your time and spoke to me with that transplanted affection, as if through me, you could say goodbye to those you loved. But you were a wonder to me. So close to sit upon a German soldier's arm. And of course I knew how well I looked my part. And it didn't matter anymore. You knew this was the end. The Russians were close at hand. We all knew that. We would forget about our roles and we could speak from our hearts. In the end, it is like that. That is the wonderful part of the end, that if we recognize it, we can speak from our hearts. You prepared yourself so beautifully. You washed and changed your linen and combed your hair and your shirt sparkled and you looked so handsome, of course. And you left with your friend, but I don't remember



him, so intent was I on observing you. But you know, I was a little tired after you left. It was as if I held my breath all the time you were there. And we found out the next day that you were riddled with holes within a mile or so of our house. And it is hard to believe that you could become so humble and die in the end. What a strange sight it was to have you own up to defeat, to be in the same room with you and know that this time it was you, who was afraid. It all happened so suddenly, you know. There was a kind of waiting joy in our hearts to be released from your grip. With what astonishment, we beheld you entering our humble hut. We had never seen you so worn and hunted. But you are still with me all the time, and I still hold my breath and get tired from doing so. I see your face and hear your voice in all its different shifts and I readjust myself accordingly. I adjust myself to maintain my poise. It is a strain.