

Valentyna Revutsky

I remember very well, that at the market, children, who I believe were from the village, but may have been from the city, walked around, begging and singing. I remember the song that they sang, "I will die, I will die. They will bury me, and nobody will know where my grave is. And nobody will come and remember, only in the early spring, the nightingale will sing." They walked around between the people and begged [for food].

My mother sold everything that she could, so that we'd survive. She took everything valuable to the TORGSYN, where, as is well known, all this was weighed, and low values given for it. For the coupons she obtained she could get some [food] products that she brought home. I remember one incident. When there was nothing left to take [to the TORGSYN], because she had traded in all our valuables, one morning she was gone for a long time. She came home around noon with a swollen jaw, and where she used to have a gold crown on her tooth, there was now just a gap. I remember that she brought a small bag of buckwheat home. I will never forget this moment, along with many others.

In early spring 1933, I was walking to school. This was in either late February or early March. It was a very nice, sunny morning, and we children walked in a group down the street. Usually when children walk, they walk quickly, and they're rambunctious. But that morning they walked very slowly as they approached the school gate. When we got to the school and I came up to the gate, I understood why. Two village children were sitting beside the gate, a boy, about seven years old, and a girl, about four. They were sitting embracing one another. There had been snow during the night covered in snow. They weren't moving and the little girl had her hand stretched out. The snow also covered her hand; it wasn't melting. They were already dead. This had a terrible effect on us children, and especially me. The thought that you're walking by dead children and that you yourself are a child was incredibly difficult, because you imagined yourself dead as well. When we left school, those children were gone. All that was left was a dry spot [on the ground].