

# 1. My Mother's First Winter in Germany

John Guzowski

My mother never thought she'd survive  
that first winter in the slave labor camps.  
She had no coat, no hat, no gloves,  
just what she was wearing when the Germans  
came to her home and killed my grandmother  
and took my mother to the labor camps.

A German guard saved her life there.  
He saw her struggling with her hands  
to dig beets out of the frozen earth,  
and he asked her if she could milk a cow.

She said, "Yes," and he took her to the barn  
where the cows were kept and raped her.

Later, the cows kept her from freezing  
and gave my mother warm milk to drink.