

**Splintered - by Lara Maria 8BW**

Every time I shut my eyes, I see it

Flashes

Of a world cracked like glass

Black smoke, worlds splintered

I didn't realise how fragile human lives were

Until I did.

Fragile like glass, easy to destroy

For those who dare to.

Every time I shut my eyes, I see it

Flashes

Of my world before it cracked.

I remember laughing, fuzzy smiles

Genuine happiness

It feels like a dream now.

Fragile like glass, easy to destroy

For those who dare to.

I carry it with me in my chest

A black, twisted part of my heart

I feel it every time my heart beats

Sometimes I wish it would just stop.

Fragile like glass, too easy to destroy

For those who dare to.

Sometimes it burns, like fire, spreading through my chest and burning my insides in pursuit.

Sometimes it feels cold, like ice, spreading numbness all the way to my fingertips.

But I keep going.

For the world.

For my family.

And for me.

Lives are so easy

to

break.

**Fragility of Freedom by Inakshi & Trisha Year 12**

1936

Dear Gabriel,  
How were the Olympics? I hope one of us enjoyed it.  
I sat stewing instead of watching.  
Maybe if they chose teams on merit not blood,  
We would've won.  
(I would've won, anyway.)  
They say all's fair in love and war  
But there's little love and no war yet,  
Which makes my ban from the Olympics nothing-  
Nothing if not unfair  
Soon they'll start banning us from other things, too.  
Perhaps I can get out before then-  
It would be nice to be with you in England, away from the  
hatecrimeshatewordshateeverything.  
Did you get home safe, at least?  
Take care of yourself over there, Gabe.  
Love,  
Samuel

1936

Dear Samuel,  
The Olympics were glorious!  
But I don't believe I was in the Germany of your letters.  
This was some other land. There were  
No hateful posters, no banners, no speeches.  
All a charade for the world's stage, I know  
I got home safe- and soon you will be, too.  
I'll find you some way of getting here - even if it kills me  
I'd do anything to get you free.  
I hope you'll come to London soon, and join me.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1938

Dear Gabriel,  
My name is no longer my own.  
Neither is my passport.  
England flies further away  
Every. Single. Day.  
I'm sorry. We were years too late.  
I'd never get over the border, anyway.  
Perhaps France or Spain  
May permit me the privilege of a home.  
If only I could avoid the extortionate emigration tax.  
War is not upon us quite yet  
Maybe there's still time?  
I could stand with you.  
In another life, perhaps.  
Love,  
Samuel.

1938

Dear Samuel,  
They had no right.  
Your freedom to travel is your own-  
Your name is your birthright.  
Perchance I could cover the fee,  
For you to leave that prison?  
But I know you, dear Samuel-  
Your stubborn nature rules your mind.  
You would not accept my help.  
Still, I send you what I can spare,  
In hopes that you will run from there,  
And never turn back,  
To those who shunned you in your own home.  
'In another life' is not good enough.  
Perhaps I can make another visit?  
Either way, I'll see you soon.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1938

Dear Gabriel,  
Shattered glass litters the front of my shop.  
Broken by them - and I have to pay.  
My shattered heart will soon match my shattered mind,  
Which aches to be truly alive:  
For this is not living, it is simply existing.  
That shop meant everything to me.  
My income, my dignity, my life's work, my history.  
Did I ever tell you how it was made?  
It took months of labour for enough to be raised.  
But in the morning, every day, when I would open the shop,  
The sun would greet me in the horizon,  
Bless me with its rays of warmth  
And remind me: Good things *do* happen.  
But now, without my shop, the doubt creeps in,  
In place of the sunlight that used to warm my skin.  
What is so provocative about our existence  
That they limit us? It feels as though I am under house arrest.  
I do not deserve this. And yet I cannot escape.  
Samuel.

1939

Dear Samuel,  
There's nothing I can say, except-  
I'm sorry.  
I wish there was something I could do  
But my own troubles have caught up to me.  
My inevitable summons have arrived -  
I dearly hope yours have not.  
I leave tomorrow for my patriotic duty, but  
Is it traitorous to hope the sun won't rise?

If it snuffed its own light out this very night  
Perhaps mine won't have to fade  
My eyes may remain bright  
And I may remain buried inside dreams  
Instead of foreign mud.  
Still, I ought not to complain, not to you.  
I'd rather be free and fight than caged in my own homeland.  
Just hope there's not a German bullet with my name on it  
And I shall survive.  
There is always time, Samuel. We will get through.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1940

Dear Gabriel,  
News of the war is far from easy to obtain,  
but I still wonder-  
How are you doing?  
Is it hell out there?  
If it's hell on the front lines, it's purgatory out here.  
I've been awaiting the inevitable, trying to outrun fate  
But it's not quite fate when it's man made, is it?  
Life is, after all, a random lottery of senseless tragedy  
and a series of near escapes  
More and more of us are disappearing...  
I would be grateful for a near escape.  
I need to outrun their systematic snatches.  
Take care of yourself. News is welcome.  
Love,  
Samuel.

1940

Dear Samuel,  
I am alive.  
Half my regiment was not as lucky.  
[REDACTED]  
If this letter is full of holes, blame the rats  
Or the censors.  
I've been [REDACTED] for a long time  
When will I go home? Never, probably.  
At least home is where my heart still lies,  
It is not so simple for you though, is it?  
If home was where your heart was, you'd be shot.  
Be safe, Samuel, and be not afraid.  
Write when you can. Tell me you're safe.  
Love,  
Gabriel.

1941

Dear Gabriel,  
Things have...  
Gotten worse.  
I'm hiding now - properly.  
In a land I should be able to freely traverse.  
Wish me luck?  
Or keep it. You may need it more than I.  
It's a small room I'm cooped up in-  
Four blank walls and two blank roommates.  
It's one hell of a risk to keep writing now but-  
I need something to keep me sane.  
Tell me more of what's happening with the war  
So I know when I can leave this place.  
Love,  
Samuel

1941

Dear Samuel,  
I am so tired. This war is just one long march.  
They [REDACTED] ensure our fatigue.  
When this is over, I will sleep for a week and nothing will wake me  
(unless you appear by my side)  
It's funny - I want nothing more than to stay somewhere warm and dry  
But you're simply desperate to go outside.  
Still, I wouldn't trade places for anything.  
[REDACTED]  
You're a permanent resident in my prayers  
And per your letters they seem to be working.  
When this is over, I promise no walls will ever confine you  
Our conversations won't be marred by black streaks and vague words.  
[REDACTED]  
I promise you'll be free.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1941

Dear Gabriel,  
I'm trying to keep it together,  
But it gets a little harder when it never gets better.  
I haven't gone outside in months.  
Two roommates turned into one today.  
She only needed some air-  
But now...  
I doubt it's much use to her anymore.  
I dare not say much else. These letters become more illegal by the minute.  
But I still send them.  
All's well that ends well?  
Please, let this end well for us both.  
I miss you. Please respond.  
Please, *please*, be alive.  
Love,  
Samuel.

1942

Dear Samuel,

[REDACTED]  
It's going [REDACTED]  
Apologies. I received this back undelivered.  
The censorship gets stricter every day.  
Allow me to restart.  
Dear Samuel,  
I'm deeply sorry  
For your loss and your situation.  
My words fail me- there are none  
To comfort someone living as if imprisoned  
Because of who they are,  
Not the crimes they have done.  
One last entreaty:  
Don't go outside.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1942  
Gabriel,  
They got me.  
I don't know if there will be another letter.  
I love you.  
Goodbye.  
Samuel.

1942  
Samuel,  
Stay put. Keep your head down.  
The best thing you can do is be *useful*.  
I'm [REDACTED]  
There had better be another letter.  
I did not get [REDACTED] for you to die now.  
I did not survive these [REDACTED] for you to die now.  
And to whoever is censoring this - [REDACTED]  
I will see you soon, Samuel.  
I will not consider the alternative.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1943  
Gabriel,  
I'm here.  
I'm alive.  
Are you?  
Samuel.

1943  
Dear Samuel,  
You will never understand the tsunami of relief  
That drowned me with your eight words.  
[REDACTED]  
I cannot [REDACTED]  
I have news [REDACTED] though, if you'll take it:

[redacted] but unfortunately [redacted]  
I'm not sure that will make it [redacted]

But I dare to hope-  
And if that makes me a fool,  
So be it.

[redacted]  
Send another note if possible. I miss you.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1944  
Gabe,  
I'm-  
I'm sick.  
I have outlived my usefulness.  
I'll take that luck now.  
Love,  
Samuel.

1944  
Samuel,  
I don't believe it.  
Just - keep going.  
You're not sick. You're simply tired.

[redacted]  
I'll see you soon.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1944  
Dear Gabriel,  
This is it for me.  
The end of the line.  
So I'll take one last risk-  
One last letter, one last word from me.  
One last shred of freedom-  
Before even that is torn away.  
But then again...  
The End is a freedom of its own  
Isn't it?  
The only way to truly beat the sheer fragility-  
Of a glass wall too easily broken, too easily overcome  
By hate, bitterness, and regret.  
If this is my final chance, I would do well  
To hold no hate in my heart.  
I love you, Gabe.  
Live through this, for me.



Goodbye.  
Love,  
Samuel.

1944

Samuel,  
You scare me.  
Why talk like this? What does it serve  
But to dampen the spirit and lead you to give up?  
You are not weak.  
You will *fight* and *live* and *be free*.  
I swear-  
To whichever God may be left in this cruel world,  
If I don't find you alive-  
I will rip that country apart  
And avenge you.  
Gabriel

1945

Samuel,  
We are almost at the end now.  
Nearly 10 years on, and I am in your streets again.  
How things change!  
I see the posters now, and the banners  
Hatred's ugly face is bared to us  
And I cannot look away.  
I would, though-  
If only you came back to me.  
Return to me, Samuel, and we'll run.  
I would not let you come to harm again.  
We would be together again,  
and safe.  
But only (*only*) if you return.  
Love,  
Gabriel

1945

Dear Samuel,  
How am I supposed to continue?  
I can barely leave my bed now.  
We won, if you even care.  
Excuse the smudging: my tears are a river that may never run dry  
Even as I write: my sorrow, my loss, my grief  
Tries to drown me with the life we had planned  
So long ago.  
I can't breathe. I need air-  
But I still remember what you said about the last girl who needed some.  
I remember too well too vividly too gruesomely too clearly too dangerously.  
I'm home safe now but  
I don't think you'll join me soon.  
(and it kills me.)  
Love,  
Gabriel

1946

Dear Samuel,  
It took me many letters,  
But I finally know what is true.  
The world may live on...  
But it does so without you.  
I survived the war,  
Will I survive the rest?  
The screaming nightmares,  
And mental stress.  
You are not coming back to me.  
And for my own sake-  
If i want to retain my sanity-  
I must set the ghost of your love free.  
I love you too, Samuel.  
I'll never forget you.  
Love,  
Gabriel

## The Fragility of Freedom - Faith Year 10

It does not change all at once;

It creeps up on you

Like the cold and bitter February breeze.

What was once a life of comfort and peace,

Can become as relentless as stormy seas.

She closed her eyes and felt a surge of longing;

Thoughts of liberty and justice clouded her mind.

A dream so earnest it brought her to tears:

Her teardrops fell like rain.

She knew life would never be the same.

She was lonely, but never alone.

Millions more had the same face of grief.

Underneath the layers of anguish, hid a burning passion:

a spark of hope.

**“Freedom!”** she cried.