

Spring in the Ghetto

JEWISH · Walter J. Kin · Rigli Publishing

<https://jewishthemovie.com/music/russian/spring-in-the-ghetto>

← Jewish Songs in Russian

Russian Songbook · Sung by Elechka

Весна в гетто

Spring in the Ghetto

A tango of spring sung from inside the dark, carried gently into Russian.

Spring in the Ghetto belongs to the Songs of the Holocaust cycle. According to the National Library and the song's documented history, it began as the Yiddish song Friling (Spring), written in the Vilna ghetto in 1943, with music by Avrom Brudno and original Yiddish words by Shmerke Kaczerginski. It was cast in the form of a tango, so that a dance rhythm holds a song of grief.

The description tells us the song is remembered as having first been performed on a ghetto stage in the spring of 1943, after the death of the poet's wife, and that its words carry personal mourning. It is said to have spread among prisoners in other ghettos and camps and to have become part of a shared cultural memory. After the war Kaczerginski is remembered for preserving it and including it in his collection of songs of the ghettos and camps. Brudno, who wrote the melody, is said to have died in the Klooga camp, while his music lived on.

Over the years the song has been sung by many artists and is heard at memorial concerts and in educational work, including projects connected with Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

In this recording Elechka sings the song in Russian, in a poetic adaptation of the text. It is part of a project that carries these real Jewish songs into Russian for listeners who know the language, and it is from these Russian originals that the English film JEWISH later grew. The aim here is simply to let the song be heard again, with restraint and respect for what it remembers.

Lyrics, line by line

The full Russian text of the recording, with a plain English translation under each line.

Хожу я по гетто

I walk through the ghetto

Ищу я ответа

I am searching for an answer

Как нищий брожу дотемна

Like a beggar I wander until dark
Всё просто в природе
Everything is simple in nature
Неслышно приходит
Soundlessly it comes
На улицы наши весна
Onto our streets, the spring
Тебя уводили
They were leading you away
Такой же весною
In just such a spring
И купол звенел голубой
And the blue dome was ringing
И голос негромкий
And a quiet voice
И солнца обломки
And the fragments of the sun
Погасшие вместе с тобой
Gone out together with you
Вёсны
Springs
Вы не были иль были
You were not, or you were
И вечный круг ваш
And your eternal circle
Забытьё западня
Oblivion, a trap
Вёсны
Springs
На синих-синих крыльях
On blue, blue wings
К моей любимой унесите меня

Carry me away to my beloved
Ты знаешь я помню тот дом где мы жили
You know, I remember that house where we lived
Цветник наш оставленный там
Our flower bed left behind there
Ты знаешь я помню как ноги чужие
You know, I remember how strangers' feet
Ходили по этим цветам
Walked over these flowers
Морочит меня оглушённая память
My deafened memory deceives me
И я всё стою и смотрю
And I keep standing and looking
На чёрные стебли на чёрные камни
At the black stems, at the black stones
На чёрную землю мою
At my black earth
И весны приходят но кажется в гетто
And springs come, but it seems in the ghetto
Никак не настанет тепло
Warmth will never arrive
И нет больше зелени нет больше света
And there is no more greenery, no more light
И солнце навеки зашло
And the sun has set forever
Цветы и деревья
The flowers and the trees
И всё остальное
And everything else
И даже дома снесены
And even the houses are demolished
Тебя уводили

They were leading you away
Такой же весною
In just such a spring
И больше не стало весны
And there was no more spring
Вёсны
Springs
Вы не были иль были
You were not, or you were
И вечный круг ваш
And your eternal circle
Забутьё западня
Oblivion, a trap
Вёсны
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На синих-синих крыльях
On blue, blue wings
К моей любимой унесите меня
Carry me away to my beloved
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What listeners say

Real comments left under the recording on YouTube, translated into English, with the original Russian beneath each one.

May the Lord grant you blessing.

Даруй тебе Господь благо 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏❤️

@Елена-м2х4щ

Thank you! I love your work!

Благодарю! Люблю ваше творчество!

@РахилияИбрагимова-ы2ф

Somehow it reminds me of Nina Urgant, Okudzhava, and "The Tenth Battalion." Or rather, probably the other way around: it was they who learned from you, not you from them.

чем-то похоже на Нину Ургант, Окуджаву и "Десятый батальон". то есть - наверно наоборот: это они научились от вас, а не вы от них.

@jackberushi1975

This recording has fewer published listener comments; the ones above are what we found that fit.