Over the walls, through holes, through the guard posts,  
Through the wire, through the rubble, through the fence,  
Hungry, cheeky, stubborn,  
I slip through, I nip through like a cat.

At midday, in the night, at dawn,  
In snowstorms, foul weather, and heat,  
A hundred times I risk my life,  
I stick out my childish neck.

A rough sack under my arm,  
Wearing torn rags on my back,  
With nimble young legs  
And in my heart constant fear.

But you have to bear it all,  
And you have to put up with it all,  
So that tomorrow you  
Will have your fill of bread.
Over the walls, though holes, through bricks,
At night, at dawn, and in day,
Cheeky, hungry, crafty,
I move as quietly as a shadow.

And if the hand of fate unexpectedly
Catches up with me one day in this game,
It is an ordinary trap of life.
Mother, don’t wait for me anymore.
I will not be coming back to you again,
The voice will not be heard from afar;
The dust of the streets will bury
The fate of the lost child.

And I have only one request,
And the grimace is set on the lips:
Who, Mother, will bring you
Your bread tomorrow?

This poem tells the story of a young child living in a ghetto in Warsaw, Poland, during the Second World War.

Jewish people trapped in ghettos were given rations of only 200 calories a day. Because of this, small children bravely sneaked out of the ghetto to smuggle and bring back more food from the other side.

The poet, Henryka Łazowertówna, was killed by the Nazis in 1942.