

As we march toward the cattle cars,
I grip my mother's hand, squeezing it tighter and tighter as time goes on
I can tell she is nervous, but she tries to conceal her emotions
She is the only thing I have left
She is the reason I am still breathing
Little did I know, we were arriving at the gates of death

After what feels like an eternity, we arrive at the camp
I take my first step out of the train and onto the cold, hard ground
Little did I know, this is where my life would change forever

The guard begins to bark commands at us
I express how scared I am to my mom
They chant “Women to the left, men to the right!”
My mother glares at me, her eyes empty and worried
Little did I know, this was the last time I would see her

She gives me a hug
We then go our separate ways
My mother to the left,
Myself to the right
Little did I know, her future was about to be burned to ashes

I wonder why we deserve this
Yesterday, we lived our lives in peace
Today, we are suffocating by the smell of burning flesh
They are breaking families apart
Separating me from the only thing that I have
I have hope that she will be okay without me
Little did I know, she was already long gone, engulfed by the flames

It's been days
I try to reassure myself that I will be reunited with her soon
The thought of her being dead haunts me at night
I learn to adjust to my new life, excluding her presence
I try to convince myself that I am okay
I begin to believe a life without her is not much different
In fact, I may be better off
Little did I know, this was the furthest thing from the truth

Months have gone by
I seldom think of her anymore
Our separation seems small, compared to what I've experienced
Times here are rough
I'm at my breaking point,
Yet I still have the slightest ounce of hope
Little did I know, it wouldn't get any better

I have no motivation left
My body has given up
I am deprived of hope
I'm barely alive; I'm barely breathing
Little did I know, this was not where it was going to end

The day finally came
The gates were opened
Today I regained my freedom
I was told I was the lucky one
Today was the day I was supposed to get my life back
Little did I know, this was the day I would dread the most

When I imagined liberation,
I imagined it to be the happiest day of my life,
Yet I am standing here, realizing how selfish and alone I really am
The only thing I want to do right now is hug my mother, but
She left this world in the form of smoke
I thought not having her would make it easier
Little did I know, you don't realize how important something is until you lose it

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