

Abram wrote poems from the age of eight. When he was in the Łódź ghetto, he continued to write poems and stories that recorded what life was like in the ghetto. He wrote, "Living in the hell of the ghetto and having watched the innocent blood of my brethren, I decided to pour these thoughts and ideas onto paper..."

In his story titled "A Mother's Sacrifice," Abram described the food ration line in the ghetto: "Whether your face is totally without expression or in utter despair, Ewa the canteen boss remains impassive. She is the mistress of the cauldron, and sometimes a slight movement of the ladle can soften your existence."

Abram often incorporated his own experiences of life within the ghetto into his writing. An example of this is the young boy in Abram's story titled "Josek," who takes the initiative to better his situation by asking the Chairman of the ghetto for a job in the kitchen:

"So you really want to work in the kitchen?"

"Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman," Josek replied with a slight tremble in his voice. The old man walked to his desk, pulled out a notepad, dipped his pen in the inkpot and began to write: "To the Kitchen Department. Please employ this boy in the kitchen without delay."

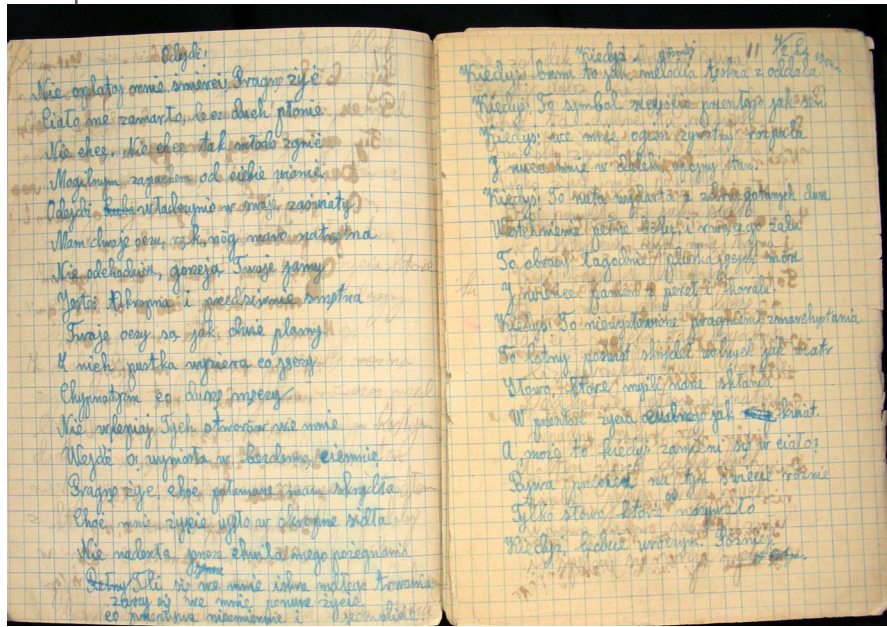
In reality, Abram was able to convince Jewish Council Chairman Rumkowski to issue a Kitchen Work Permit to his mother, Genia.

From a young age Abram wanted to write instead of work in the family factory. He believed writers were "doctors of the soul." While in the ghetto, Abram filled and re-used the pages of many notebooks to record his poetry, short stories, and novels. Abram's fictional stories allowed him to express his true feelings about his own experiences during his time in the ghetto.

"...Right are the dwellers of hell in their saying, that no one can ever describe the depths of their torture. Yet I would like, at least to some extent, to slowly guide the reader through [the]...confused and absurd aspects of life in the ghetto..."

In May of 1944, the Nazis began to liquidate the Łódź ghetto. Abram, then 17, and his mother and sister, were on the last transport out of the Łódź ghetto in August. Abram had not eaten in days when he arrived in Auschwitz, and therefore decided to join a group of children who had been guaranteed food by the Nazis. Unfortunately, the promise of food was only a ruse, and instead of a meal the Nazis corralled the children, including Abram, into the gas chambers and murdered them.

Lucie, Abram's sister, survived the war. She found Abram's notebooks, gathered them and took them with her to her new home in Paris. Lucie donated them to the Simon Wiesenthal Center Archives.



“DEPART” BY ABRAM CYTRYN English translation

Do not entangle me death, I want to live.
 My body may have withered, but my spirit burns.
 Not yet. I do not want to die yet.
 Your bear the odor of graves.
 Depart o empress into your beyond
 For I still have two eyes, two hands and two legs
 You do not leave, your wounds ablaze
 You are appalling and strangely gloomy
 Your eyes like two blots, through which emptiness moans
 and hypnotism which wearies down the soul
 Do not fix those holes on me
 Depart o conceited into ceaseless darkness.
 I want to live although my wings are broken
 Though life has caught me in horrible snare
 My moment of farewell has yet to come
 A spark of dull being still smolders inside
 The gray life is still aglow in me
 Continuing invariably and monotonously.