

DANUTA MIERNIK

Class IV

The moment I best remember from the years of the occupation

It was in June, on Midsummer's Eve. People had accused my neighbor to the Germans, saying that he was helping the partisans and providing them refuge. A lot of soldiers and gendarmes drew up to my village and cordoned off the whole street. A few of the gendarmes burst into the house and wanted to take those present to prison. The women started crying and shouting: "They're innocent!". The gendarmes, furious, showered the house with grenades. In a matter of minutes, the building was engulfed in flames. The residents fled their houses to the field, trying to escape the fire. The barn and the pigsties caught fire from the house. The cows broke free from their chains and ran into the field. All of the livestock started fleeing away from death. One of the pigs burned to death, for it was locked up in the pigsty and couldn't escape.

The fire destroyed the entire farmstead, leaving only a smoking ruin and a few jutting chimneys. The poor neighbors, with no roof over their heads, had to seek shelter elsewhere. What I had seen disturbed me deeply, and I thanked God that our house had survived.