

Moderato

S'licht er gets far-tay-et der saynd vi a khay-e, der
 Some - where crouch-ing, hid-ing The foe beast-like bid-ing The
 mau - zer er vakht in mayn hant
 mau - zer keeps watch in my hand.

Nor Sud-den -
 plu - tsem ge - sta - po, Es firt a ge - shmid - tn Durkh
 /y the ge - sta - po Leads one whom they've trapped oh! Through
 fint - ter - nish dem ho - men - dant.
 dark - ness it's our com - man - dant.

Somewhere crouching, hiding
 The foe, beastlike, biding,
 The mauzer keeps watch in my hand –
 Suddenly the Gestapo
 Leads one whom they've trapped oh!
 Through darkness, it's our commandant.

With lightning the night
 Tears the ghetto with fright,
 There's danger about and fears mount.
 Dear friends so devoted,
 Chains must be exploded,
 And vanish must our commandant.

Night faded, it tore us,
 As death stood before us,
 The ghetto in fever did pant.
 In turmoil the ghetto –
 Commands the Gestapo:
 It's death or it's your commandant.

Then spoke up our Itsik
 As quick as a blink is
 "I must heed this edict, that's clear.
 I'll not forfeit your lives
 To the tyrants' cruel knives."
 To death he goes without fear.

Again, crouching, hiding
 The foe, beastlike, biding,
 Again mauzer guards in my hand.
 Now you're dear to me,
 My savior you must be,
 Now you must be my commandant.

S'licht ergets fartayet
 Der saynd vi a khay-e,
 Der mauzer er vakht in mayn hant,
 Nor plutsem geshtapo.
 Es firt a geshmidtn
 Durkh fintsternish dem komendant.

Di nakht hot mit blitsn
 Dos geto tserisn,
 "Gefar!" – shrayt a toyer, a vant.
 Khaveyrim getraye
 Fun keytn bafrayen
 Farshvindn mit dem komendant.

Di nakht iz farfloygn,
 Der toyt far di oygn.
 Dos geto es fibert in brand.
 In umru dos geto.
 Es drot di geshtapo:
 "Toyt, – oder dem komendant!"

Gezogt hot dan Itsik –
 Un durkh a blits iz –
 "Ikh vil nit ir zolt tsulib mir
 Darfn dos lebn
 Dem soyne opgebn" . . .
 Tsum toyt geyt shtolts der komandir!

Ligt vider fartayet
 Der saynd vi a khay-e,
 Vakhst vider, mayn mauzer, in hant,
 Itst bist mir tayer.
 Zay du mayn bafrayer.
 Zay du itster mayn komendant!

ס'licht ערגען פארטיעט
 דער פֿינְד ווי אַחִיה,

דער מאזער ער וואקט אין מין האנט,
 נאָר פֿלּוצָעָם געשטָאָפָּא.

עס פֿירט אַגעשְׁמִידְטָן
 דורך פֿינְצָטְעָרְנִישׁ דעם קָאמְעַנְדָּאָנט.

די נאָקט האָט מיט בליצֶן
 דאס געטאָ צעריסֶן.

געפָּאָר – שְׂוִיְּשִׁת אַטוּוֹר, אַזּוֹאנְט.

חֲבִרִים גַּעֲטְרִיעָן
 פֿוֹן קִיטְּן בָּאָפְּרִיעָן.

פֿאָרוֹשְׁוִינְדָּן מֵיט דעם קָאמְעַנְדָּאָנט.

די נאָקט אַיז פֿאָרְפְּלִיגֶן,
 דער טויט פֿאָר די אוֹיגֶן.

דאָס געטאָעס פֿיבְּעָרְט אַין ברָאנְד.

אין אָומְרוֹ דאס געטאָר,
 עס דראָט די געשטָאָפָּא:

טוּטִ – אָדרָע דעם קָאמְעַנְדָּאָנט!

געזָאָגֶט האָט דָּאָן אַיצִיךְ –
 אָון דורך אַבלְּזֶן אַיז –

"אַיךְ ווֹיל נִיט אַיר זָאלְט צּוֹלִיב מִיד
 דָּאָרְפְּן דאס לעַבְנִ –
 דעם שׂוֹנוֹאָגְעַבְןִ" ...

צּוֹם טוּט גִּיט שְׂטָאָלִץ דער קָאמְעַנְדָּאָנט!

ליָגֶט ווֹידָעָר פֿאָרְטִיעָט
 דער פֿינְד ווי אַחִיה,

וּואָכָסֶט וּוֹידָעָר, מִין מאזער, אַין האָנט,
 אַיצִיךְ בִּיסְט מִיד טִיעָר,

זַיְּדוֹ מִין בָּאָפְּרִיעָר,
 זַיְּדוֹ אַיצִיךְ מִין קָאמְעַנְדָּאָנט!

On July 16, 1943 the Gestapo arrested Itsik Vitnberg, the commander of the partisan forces in the Vilno ghetto. A group of partisans freed him on the way to prison. The next day the Gestapo threatened to liquidate the entire ghetto population if Vitnberg did not surrender. To avert the imminent bloodbath, Vitnberg sacrificed his life and surrendered. Words are by S. Kaczerginski (see note about author in *Friling*); the melody is based on a Russian song.