

Szlengel, Wladyslaw

(d. April 1943), Jewish poet and songwriter who wrote many of his poems in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Before the war, Szlengel was a very active writer, composing satiric poems for newspapers and theaters. When he was interned in the Warsaw ghetto, he began creating both prose and poetry for *Sztuka*, a club for the ghetto's wealthier Jews. During that period, he wrote about his views of the Germans and his apprehension about the ghetto's administration. His poems were very popular in the ghetto, and were read out loud at meetings.

When the Germans began deporting the ghetto's Jews to extermination camps, the tone of Szlengel's poetry changed. He began writing about the fear felt by the ghetto's inhabitants, now that death was knocking at their doors, and about the relationship between man and God in such a situation. His last poems deal with the deterioration of the ghetto during its final weeks of existence. Even at that point, Szlengel continued to share his poetry with the public---in small, secret get-togethers.

Szlengel was killed in April 1943 during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Some of his poetry and prose were saved, and a collection of his writings was published in Polish under the title, *What I Read to the Dead*.