

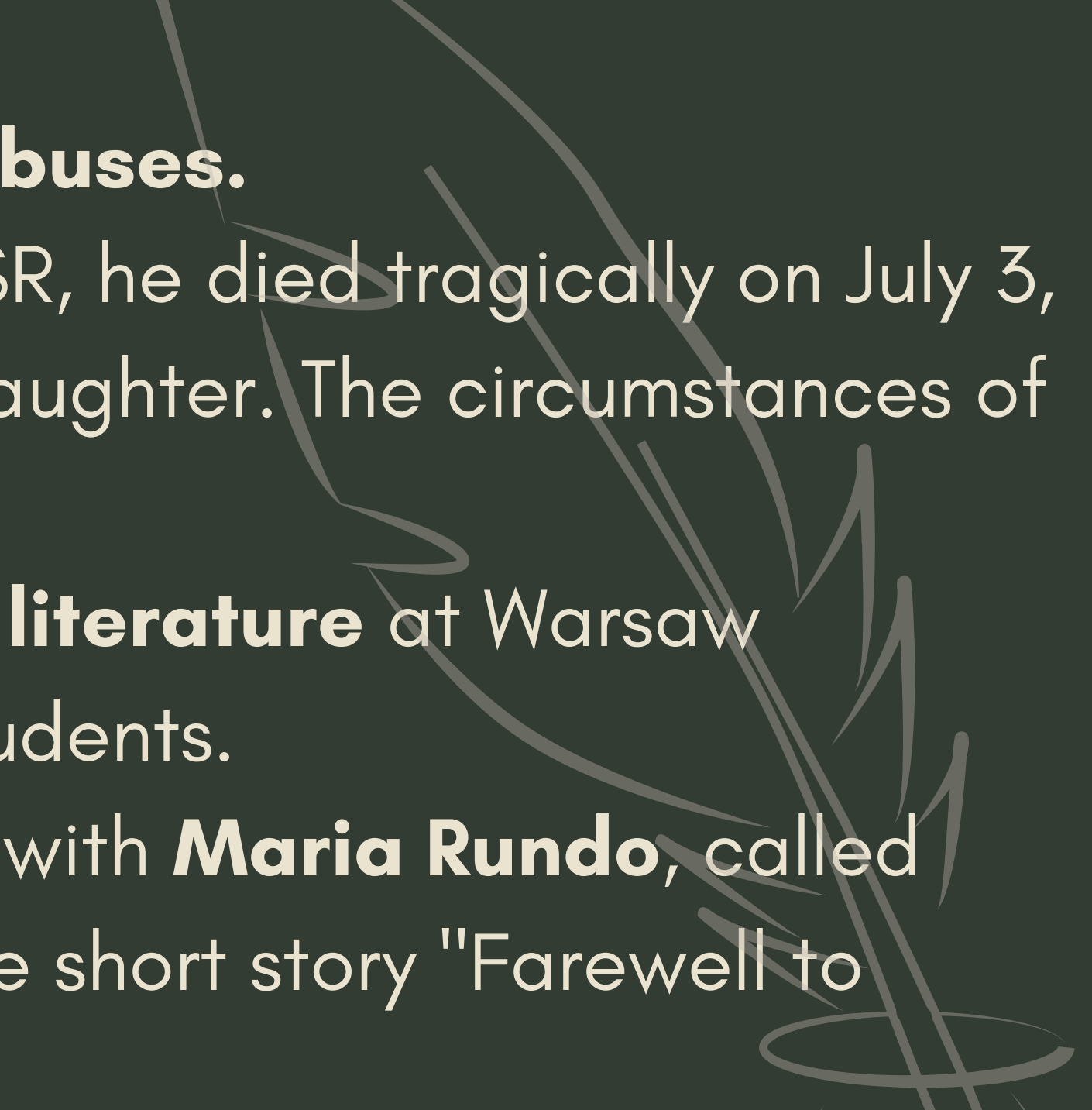
Tadeusz Borowski

„The People Who
Walked On”

a story from World War II



about the author

1. Poet, prose writer, publicist.
 2. He belonged to **The Generation of Columbuses**.
 3. He was born in **1922** in Żytomierz in the USSR, he died tragically on July 3, **1951**, just a few days after the birth of his daughter. The circumstances of his death are unclear.
 4. He attended underground studies in **Polish literature** at Warsaw University, where he was one of the best students.
 5. In his personal life, he was in a relationship with **Maria Rundo**, called Tuśka, the prototype of the heroine from the short story "Farewell to Maria".
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1. Borowski was 21 years old when he was imprisoned in **Pawiak prison** for two months before he was sent to **Auschwitz**.
2. The day before him, the **Gestapo captured Maria** – she ended up in the women's camp in Birkenau.
3. At that time, he wrote **poems** as well as **camp songs** and **letters** to Maria.
4. Forced into **slave labor** in extremely harsh conditions, Borowski later reflected on this experience in his writing.
5. In August 1944 he was transported to the **Natzweiler-Dautmergen** camp, and then to **Dachau-Allach**, which was liberated by the Americans on 1 May 1945. After that Borowski found himself in a camp for displaced persons near **Munich**.
6. He was **released** in September 1945 and in early June 1946 he returned to **Warsaw**.

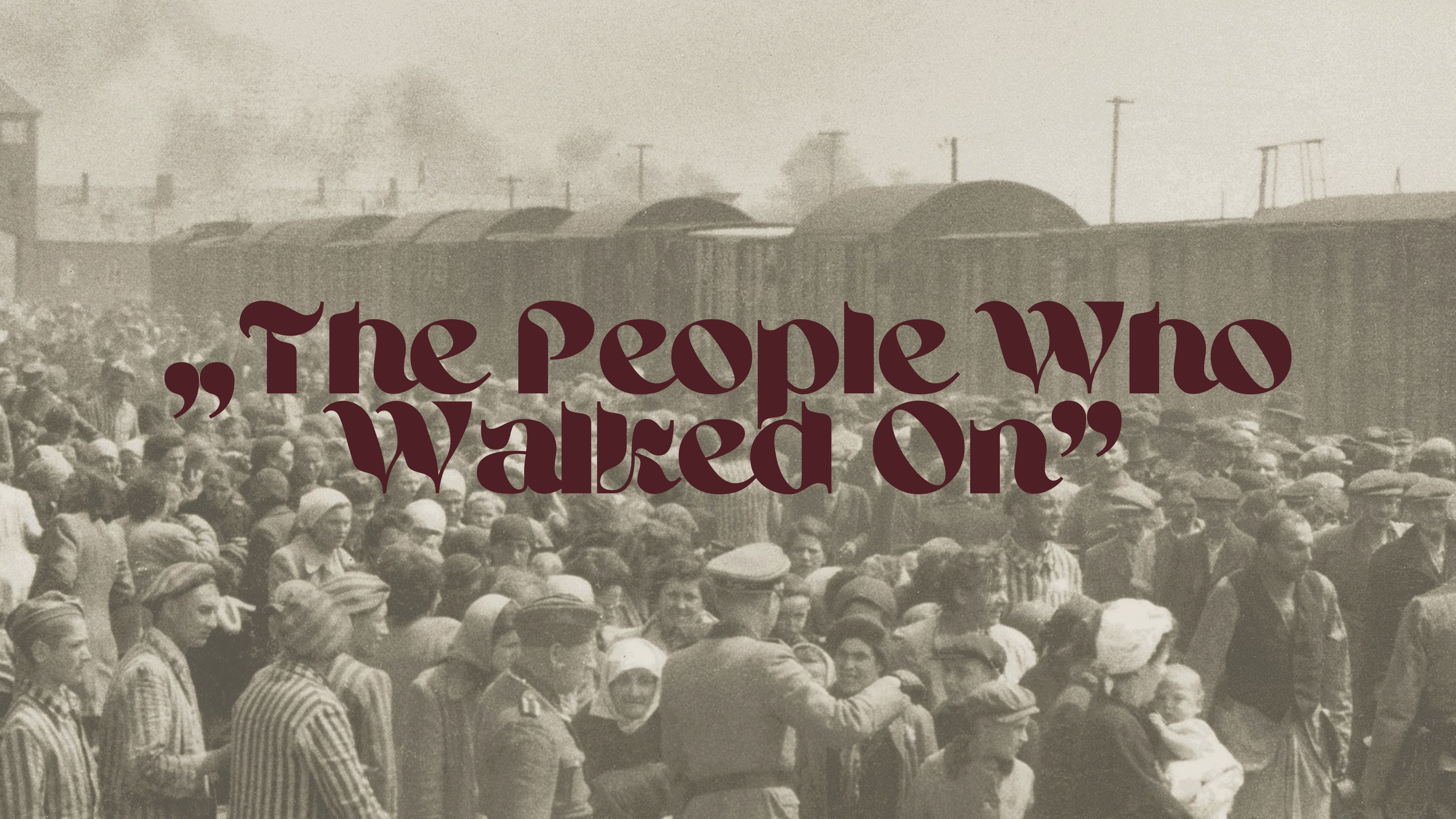




**„Farewell to Maria” –
camp experiences**

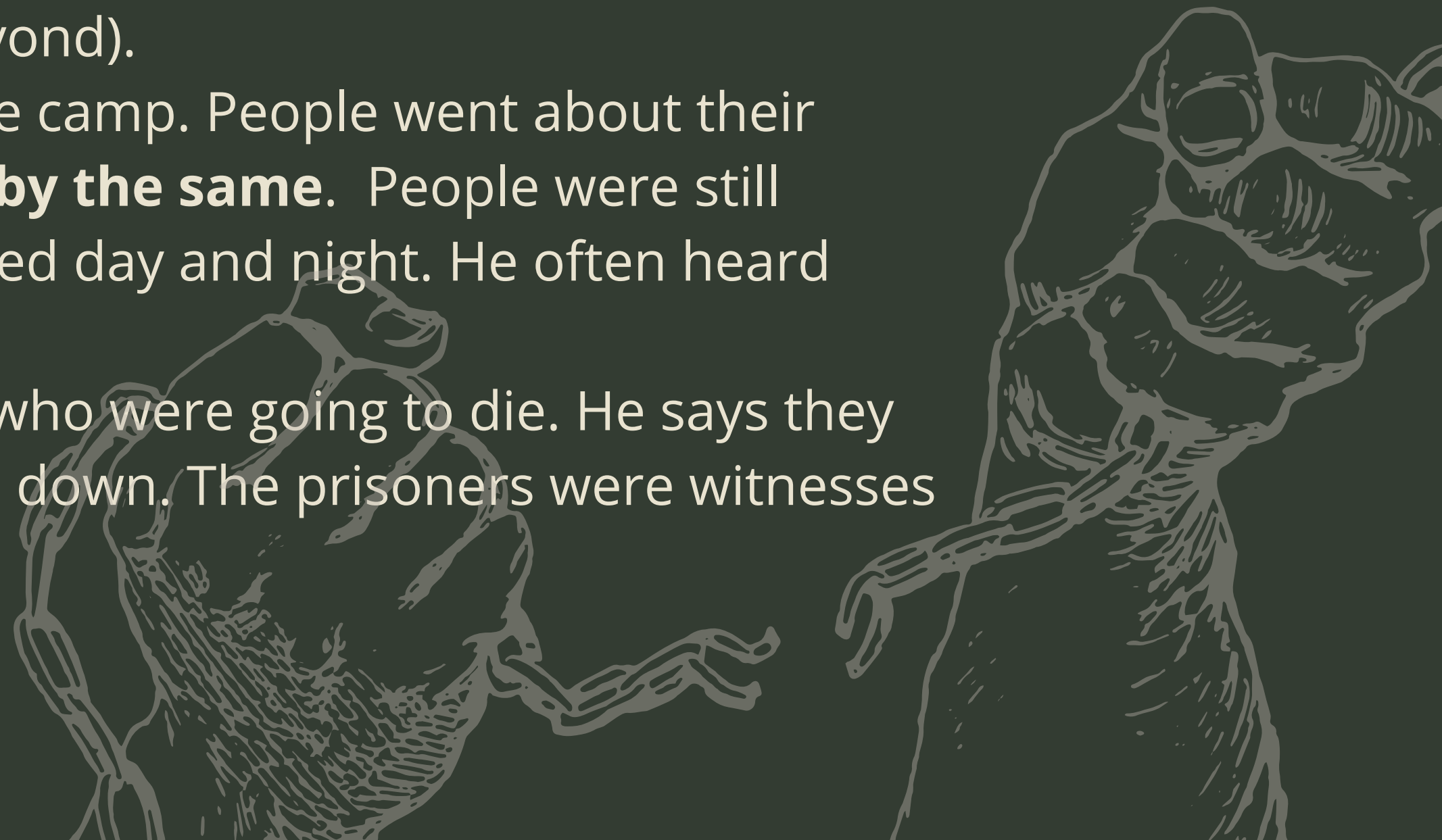
1. Borowski included his own **camp experiences** in the collection of short stories "**Farewell to Maria**" (1948).
2. These stories are linked by the theme of **World War II** and the **character of Tadek**, who is both the narrator and the main character.
3. These are mostly **autobiographical** stories, but Tadek cannot be equated completely with Tadeusz Borowski.
4. He does not judge or classify the characters, but strives for **objectivity**.
5. Tadek adapts to the reality of the camp, taking up a fight for his life and agreeing to passively participate in the crime.
6. The most important issue is the **influence of the war** and the concentration camp on human morality, its code of ethics and psyche.
7. The difference between the executioner and the victim is blurred.
8. Tadeusz Borowski's stories show **different attitudes** of people towards extreme situations - **passivity, activity** or an **attempt to adapt** to the prevailing conditions.

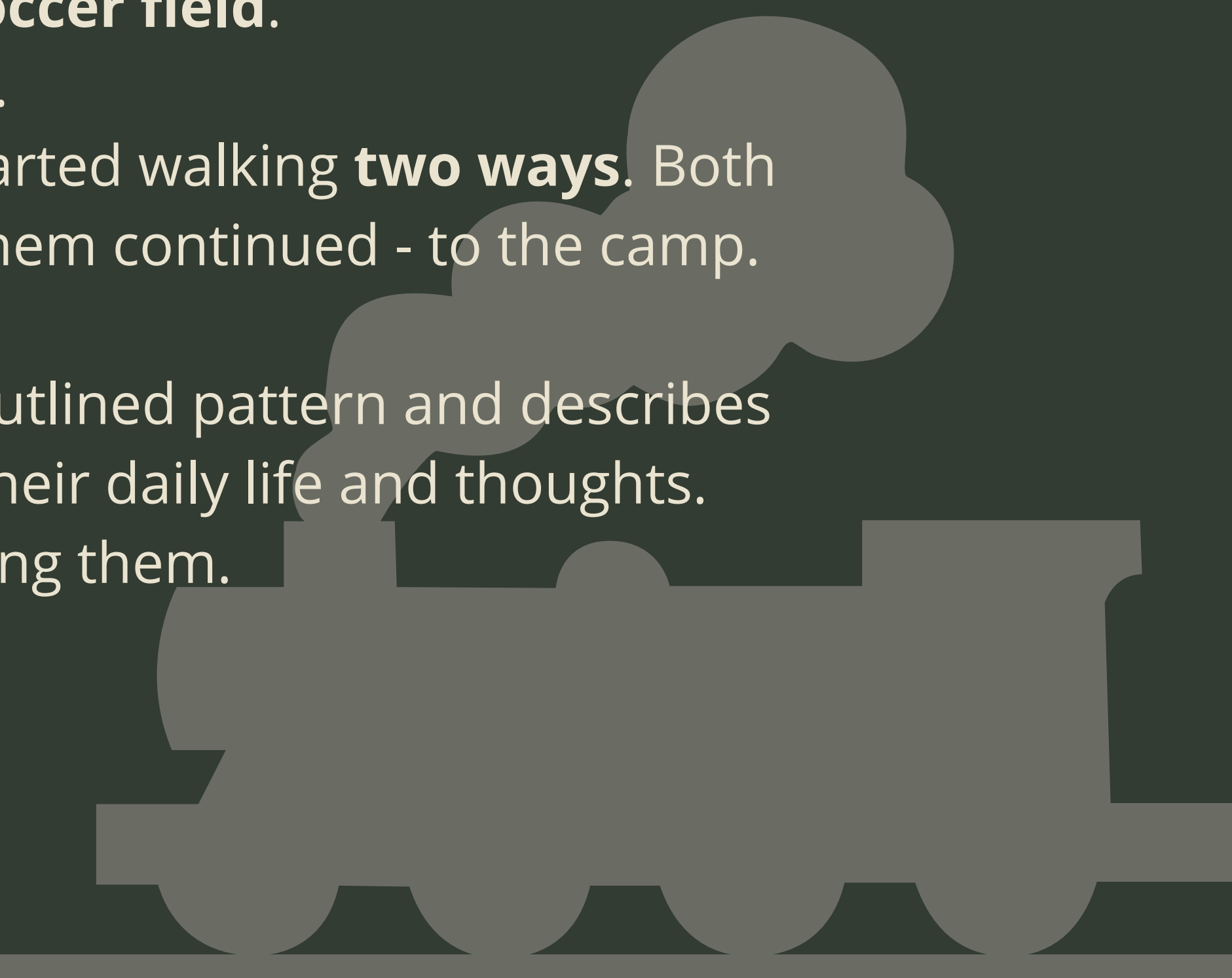




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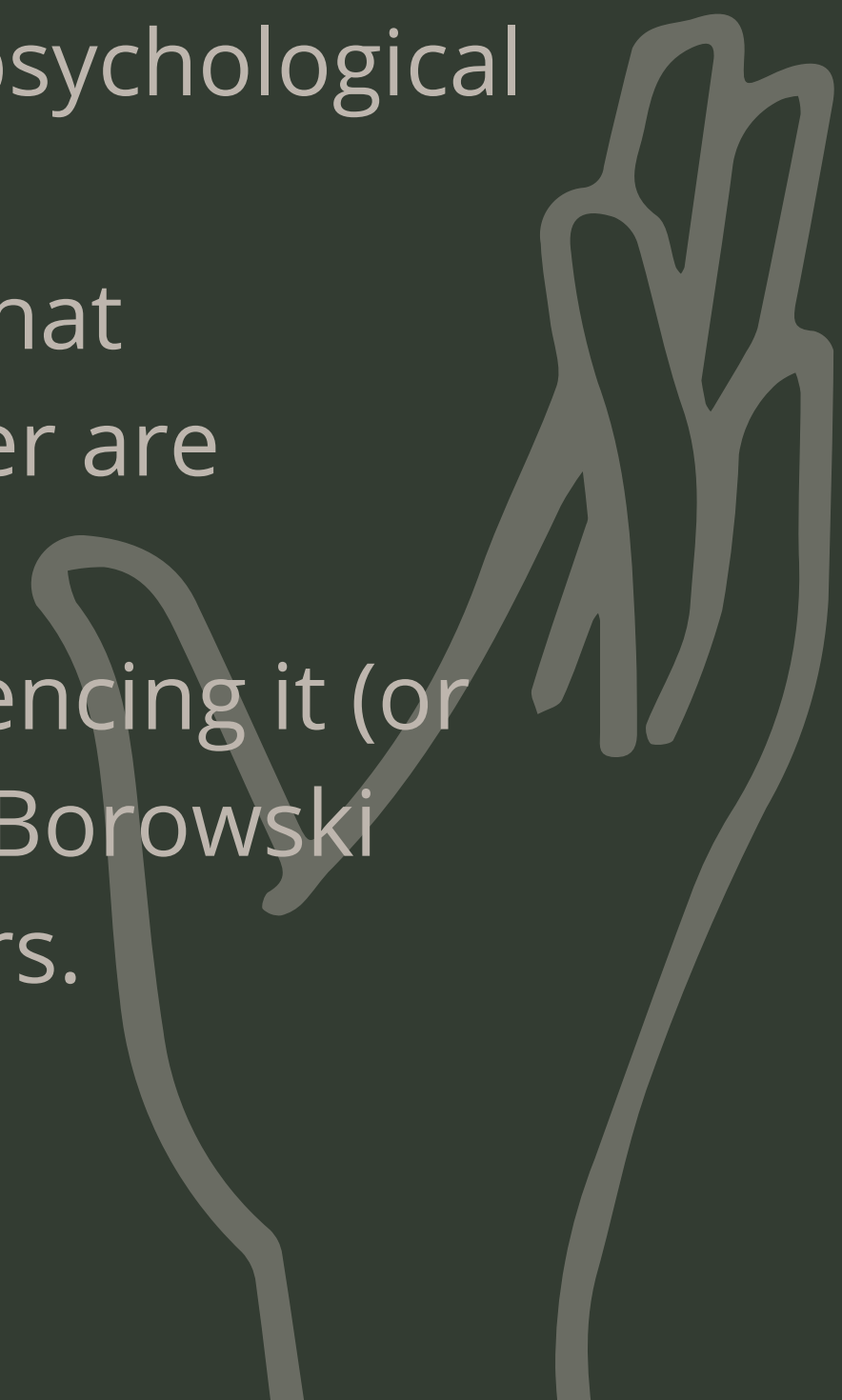
1. The story is about the last summer spent by the main character in the **Auschwitz-Birkenau camp**.
2. The events unfold in **1944**, when Germany begins to lose on the Eastern and Western fronts. Transports with prisoners keep arriving at the camp.
3. The sentence is repeated there many times: "**People walked and walked**" (to the crematorium or beyond).
4. The narrator tells about his life in the camp. People went about their business there, and **the days went by the same**. People were still walking behind the ramp. They walked day and night. He often heard them scream.
5. The narrator reflects on the people who were going to die. He says they didn't know they were going to burn down. The prisoners were witnesses of these terrible, merciless murders.



1. The story begins with the narrator's story about the place where he and other prisoners were building a **soccer field**.
 2. The **crematoria** could be seen nearby.
 3. New people coming from the trains started walking **two ways**. Both led to the crematorium, but some of them continued - to the camp. It meant **life** for those people.
 4. The rest of the story is based on this outlined pattern and describes the relationships between prisoners, their daily life and thoughts. They are used to the cruelty surrounding them.
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important terms

behaviourism

1. The author focuses on **human behaviour**, avoiding any psychological portraits, introspection and internal monologues.
 2. Only the **external sphere** matters and it is on this basis that conclusions and assessments concerning a given character are formulated.
 3. By depriving individual characters of the inner sphere, silencing it (or speculations about it), removing emotions and thoughts, Borowski showed how the camp had a **brutal effect** on its prisoners.
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reification

1. objectification
2. **Man becomes an object, a commodity.**
3. Everything, even life, can be bought and sold.
4. Ethical concepts become relative.



the accustomed one

1. a man who **thinks in terms of camp life** and acts according to **camp morality**
2. perverted by the camp, wanting to **survive at all costs**
3. survival was crucial and that meant adapting to the prevailing conditions, accepting death and cruelty



reversed decalogue

1. The war and the times of occupation changed the mentality of the people.
2. They lived according to **new rules**, professing the values of the so-called "reversed decalogue" - what was **forbidden and denied before the war**, now was something completely **natural**.



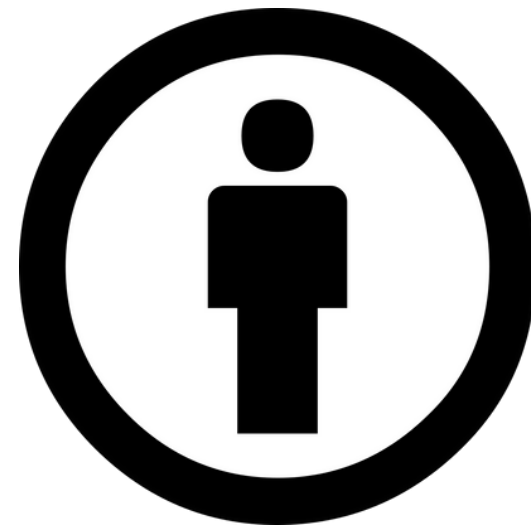
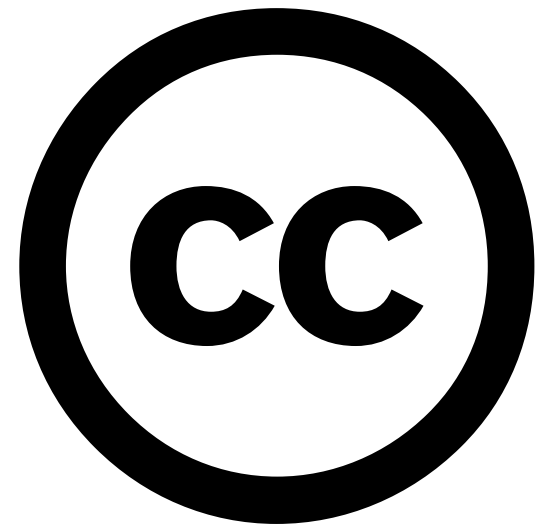
thank you!

SOURCES

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Erasmus+



This presentation has been created by students taking part in Erasmus+ project.