

Riva Pizman's Brother Grigoriy Gershberg



My older brother Grigoriy Gershberg photographed after he went to the army to serve his active service. My brother is wearing a military uniform here. This photo was taken in Vinnitsa in 1940.

My parents' first child Grigoriy - his Jewish name was Gershl, was born in 1920. My older brothers studied in an 8-year Ukrainian school. When my brothers grew older, they started helping mama about the house. My brothers actually raised me. My brothers went shopping, cooked food, cleaned the apartment and looked after me. After finishing school my older brother Grigoriy became an apprentice of a mechanic at the machine building plant. He bought me my first doll, a rubber naked doll, when he received his first wage. I was ill and had to stay in bed and he wanted to cheer me up. Mama made dolls from whatever cloth leftovers she had. The doll my brother bought me seemed a real beauty to me. He also bought me brown shoes with buckles: these were also my first shoes, since all I had before were what I got from my sister and brothers. I was even reluctant to step on the floor wearing the shoes: I didn't want to daub them. One year later my second brother finished school and went to work as a shop assistant in a store. My brothers gave mama their wages.

My older brother Grigoriy was recruited to the army in 1940. In March 1941 my brother Mikhail was to go to the army. Some time before mama went to the military registry office to ask the commander to let one son stay at home considering that my father was paralyzed. The commander promised my mother that Grigoriy would be demobilized in June-July being the breadwinner in the family, but Mikhail had to go to the army. Before going to the army Mikhail bought me my first winter coat from thick coffee-colored woolen fabric. He wrote us from the army, and in each letter he added few words for me. He told me to study well at school and that he would work to help me to finish in college, when he returned, but this was not to be. Grigoriy disappeared near Stalingrad in 1943.