

**In May 1938 Felice Schragenheim reflects on her job prospects as an immigrant<sup>1</sup>**

Poem 'Contemplating the Future' by Felice Schragenheim,<sup>2</sup> dated May 1938 (typescript)<sup>3</sup>

Contemplating the future.

I love to dream of my career,  
of cars, of sunshine, of beauty and money,  
I think about oceans, deep blue and distant,  
about journalism and the big wide world.  
With the aid of the atlas, one is allowed  
to travel in faraway lands. I like doing so  
and I know my life will surely change,  
and somewhere there's even a little star for me.  
Yes, if only I were far from here for a start –  
then I'll just keep on dreaming,  
then I'll build it, this career,  
but just while cooking and cleaning my room.  
It is good that hope is granted to us,  
a self-delusion whereby one forgets  
that our guest appearance in this life  
is a tragicomedy.

1 Jüdisches Museum Berlin, Sammlung Wust-Schragenheim, donated by Elisabeth Wust (2006/37/166); published in Erica Fischer, *Aimée & Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943*, trans. Edna McCown (New York: HarperCollins, 1995 [German edn, 1994]), pp. 64–65. This poem has been retranslated from the original German.

2 Felice Schragenheim (1922–1945), schoolgirl; poet, and labourer; forced to leave school in Nov. 1938, before her school-leaving examinations, and then made various attempts to emigrate; from Oct. 1941 to 1942 forced labourer at C. Sommerfeld & Co. in Berlin, a company that manufactured bottle tops; in Oct. 1942 'went underground' in Berlin; was arrested in 1944 and deported to Theresienstadt, from there to Auschwitz and finally to Bergen-Belsen, after which all trace of her is lost.

3 In the original a second, handwritten, poem appears below this poem: 'I want to reach out my hands to you always, / perhaps even into the great void, / and I wait ... wait for the sign / from you to enter the land of light that is too bright.'