The Butterfly

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun’s tears would sing
against a white stone...

Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I’m sure because it wished to
kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto
But I have found my people here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut candles in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don’t live in here,
In the ghetto.

Pavel Friedmann  4.6.1942

The poem is preserved in typewritten copy on thin paper in the collection of poetry by
Pavel Friedmann, which was donated to the National Jewish Museum during its
documentation campaign. It is dated June 4, 1942 in the left corner.

Pavel Friedmann was born January 7, 1921, in Prague and deported to Terezín* on
April 26, 1942. He died in Oswiecim* (Auschwitz) on September 29, 1944.

*Terezín was a Nazi concentration camp.