"I Could Not Heal You"

The Second Generation Grapples With Its Holocaust Legacy

EDITED BY **KAREN SHAWN**

ART BY **NANCY PATZ**

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This special issue of *PRISM* marks the journal's first appearance under the auspices of Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Yeshiva University Press. The Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, *PRISM*'s long-time institutional home, remains our partner.

Only in its second year, the Fish Center is already rising to assume a leading role in the field, offering a Master's degree in Holocaust and genocide studies, launching an advanced certificate in Holocaust education, and now offering *PRISM*.

"We are continents, worlds apart," reflects the poet Gregg Shapiro on his relationship with his survivor father in "Tattoo," one of the 29 poems featured in this collection. We, those who learned about the Holocaust from our grandparents and parents, stand in one world; in another remain those who experienced it first-hand. The consequential mission of the Fish Center and the masterful compilation of poems, essays, and artwork in this special edition, however, constitute a bridge that will help span the chasm between these separate continents, worlds.

We are the fortunate ones, but our good fortune comes with a heavy burden—to learn, understand, remember, and then transmit this knowledge to future generations. While no single historical account, documentary film, memoir, story, or poem could secure a future for one of the darkest moments in humanity's past, the poems and essays in this small volume, together with their illustrative, luminous art, are a significant part of the ongoing, laborious, and endless endeavor to do so.

As a grandson of three Holocaust survivors, I am proud to be a partner to and sponsor of this effort. I congratulate editor Karen Shawn, artist Nancy Patz, and all the contributors for bringing us this powerful artistic and educational gift of *I Could Not Heal You*.

Dr. Shay Pilnik
Director, Fish Center

FEBRUARY 2022

A SPECIAL EDITION OF *PRISM: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS*

In celebration of Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

"I Could Not Heal You"

The Second Generation Grapples With Its Holocaust Legacy

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A SPECIAL EDITION OF *PRISM*

"I Could Not Heal You" The Second Generation Grapples With Its Holocaust Legacy, edited by Karen Shawn and with art by Nancy Patz, is a special edition of *PRISM* published in celebration of Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. It is published through the courtesy of the Henry, Bertha and Edward Rothman Foundation, the Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration, and the Michael Scharf Publication Trust, Yeshiva University Press.

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- Poetry submissions must be sent to Dr. Charles Adès Fishman, our poetry editor, at carolus@optimum.net. Poetry should be single-spaced. Include your name and email address on each poem.
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Karen Shawn

Introduction

"If anything can, it is memory that will save humanity," Elie Wiesel observed in his 1986 Nobel lecture (para. 3). The 29 poems and short essays in this collection, accompanied by paintings and line drawings by renowned artist Nancy Patz, offer a glimpse into the thoughts, reflections, and memories of women and men who were born to survivors of the Holocaust. Now middle-aged or older, these grown children of survivors, the Second Generation (2G), are coming to terms with their often-fraught legacy and seek to share their parents' experiences, tightly interwoven with their own. They have experienced firsthand the Holocaust's "repercussions and consequences . . . still actively evolving" (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. xiv), and their pensive writings illustrate Freud's observation that "everything new must have its roots in what was before" (Bakan, 1958/2004, p. viii).

"I suppose," muses Patricio Pron (2014), a young Argentinian novelist who writes of history and remembrance, "at some point all children need to know who their parents were and they take it upon themselves to find out. Children are detectives of their parents." He continues:

> These children aren't judging their parents—it's impossible for them to be truly impartial, since they owe them everything, including their lives—but they can try to impose some order on their story . . . and then they can protect that story and perpetuate it in their memory. (p. 4)

Our writers mourn what has been lost, and they have chosen intimate moments to be read and reread, thoughtfully considered, protected, and long remembered. In so doing, they have added nuanced, necessary layers to the complex story of the Holocaust and its aftermath, a shadow under which we all live.

The works within were carefully curated for their power and beauty, for their authenticity of voice, and for their ease of integration into classroom study of the Holocaust. The texts are accessible to and appropriate for students in high school through university, introducing readers to children of survivors and to moments of the Holocaust itself. The writing prompts interpretation of the artwork; the art encourages reflection on its relation to the writing it illustrates.

Our selections come from a variety of contributors. We've included world-class professional poets and writers who have been published in Yeshiva University's *PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators*. Other authors are members of 2G speakers bureaus who participated in writing workshops I've conducted. One poem was crafted in my inaugural course in the Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies master's degree program at Yeshiva University.

In this volume, the authors write of their friends', relatives', fathers', and mothers' experiences as they learned of them, and of the effects these experiences had on their households and their youth. The range of these poignant, detailed accounts is wide, but throughout, trauma is leavened with grace, pain with understanding and acceptance, and loss with gratitude for parents' resilience, protection, sacrifices, and great love.

For each poem and short narrative, the artist's responsive painting brings to the fore the vivid, bold hues, the darks and the golds behind the words. A palette of emotions colors and highlights the black-and-white text, adding meaning even to the spaces between the words.

Arianna Neumann (2020), another Second Generation writer, reveals:

> Sometimes I lose my bearings. I forget that time has passed. And for that briefest moment, I want to rush again to my father. . . . I want to wrap my arms around him, place my head on his heart, and . . . whisper that I understand. (p. 307)

The prose and poetry in these pages serve just that purpose for us, the readers. Their words will encircle us, touch our hearts, and prompt us to whisper, with humility and gratitude, "I understand."

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Nancy Patz

About the Art

Creating the art for this special volume was an exhilarating process, different in many ways from my experiences in writing and illustrating my previous books.

Most importantly, this is a collection—a gathering together of poems and narratives by numerous Second Generation authors with powerful stories to tell. I wanted the art to reflect these individual texts—in mood, in feeling, but not by showing specific characters or actions.

Some of the art is necessarily quite abstract. In the same sense that each reader brings his or her own sensitivities and interpretations to the reading of a poem, so, too, can each observer have differing responses to a piece of art. My intention was to allow the art to serve as another gateway into the experiences evoked by the poetry and prose.

Editor Karen Shawn and I discussed fully and at length each pairing of text and art. Often we agreed on the paintings and drawings I created for them—often, but not always. And when we disagreed, our conversations about the mood, the tone, the colors or shadings, the potential implications, or even the placement of the art on the page unfailingly led me to make changes or draw or paint a different work that pleased us both.

Sometimes we wanted bold art that would echo the rage or anguish expressed in the essay or the poem. For these I used fast-moving brushstrokes with black Chinese ink or strong diagonals of color and line. Sometimes we wanted art that was the opposite—peaceful, serene, depicting a quiet moment—to reflect the sadness, despair, appreciation, or love conveyed by the written word. Then I painted a joyous, colorful bouquet, a single flower, a gently-hued landscape. I drew people as well—a father and daughter dancing, a daughter marveling at her mother's courage—and objects: hats and shoe boxes, toys, a wine cup.

Echoing the wide range of emotions expressed in these texts, my drawings and paintings display the different styles I've developed across the years, often for specific books I've written and illustrated: free, wet, and washy watercolors; quiet, soft pencil drawings; strong, action-filled collages. I used to lament that I hadn't developed one clearly recognizable style. Now I'm very grateful, hoping that my art here reflects the variety and meaning of the writers' heartfelt and searing experiences they describe.

Karen and I told each other for years that "someday we have to do a book together!" I could not have anticipated how fulfilling an experience this would be. I know we both value the sense of satisfaction that has come from creating strong visuals, layers that encourage additional reflection and contemplation, to complement these honest and intimate writings.

Eva Fogelman

Foreword

When a group becomes identified as such in society, a tendency exists to compare its members to a known cohort. The Second Generation became such a group in the late 1970s, when Helen Epstein's watershed article "Heirs of the Holocaust" (1977) appeared in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, followed two years later by her groundbreaking book, *Children of the Holocaust: Conversations With Sons and Daughters of Survivors* (1979).

At that time, mental-health professionals, however well-meaning, were unaware of historical trauma and, when confronted with problems of children of survivors, assumed that their parents were alcoholics or abusive. Nothing could have been further from reality. The founder of relational psychoanalysis, Stephen Mitchell (1988), best explained this phenomenon when he said, "Psychopathology is failure of imagination" (personal correspondence).

In the 21st century, the catchall label of intergenerational transmission of trauma has come into vogue to describe the psychological health of sons and daughters of Holocaust survivors. This label is further intensified by the science of neurology and epigenetics, which now suggests that children of survivors, too, may suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder. The experiences in the everyday life of those who grew up with survivor parents are challenging to capture in psychological research with questionnaires and scales, or in laboratories testing with samples of urine, blood, or saliva. What is missing as well in all these research efforts are representative samples of individuals in this population.

Now we have this innovative compilation of illustrative voices of the Second Generation in Karen Shawn and Nancy Patz's *"I Could Not Heal You": The Second Generation Grapples With Its Holocaust Legacy*, a truly remarkable window into the lives of individual middle-aged descendants of Holocaust survivors. Their words reveal the nuances of what it means to grow up with parents who lost their families, homes, and communities, whose possessions were stolen, whose very identities were reduced to less than human.

The contributors to this volume represent the majority of offspring of survivors from all walks of life. Each writer describes, through lived or observed experience, how a parent's massive trauma has seeped into a child's existence. The reader feels their empathic imagination, a most common ability among children of survivors. How can a girl ignore her parent's screams from nightmares? How can a boy be oblivious to his father's fears when there is a knock on the door? How can a young adult overlook her mother's obsessive routine in peeling potatoes?

One of the features that differentiate Second Generation members from one another is how their parents' afflictions were communicated to them. For the most part, survivors revealed bits and pieces to their children at age-appropriate levels. In extreme cases, the graphic details were revealed when a child was too young to comprehend such horrors. At the other end, overall silence or denial pervaded the household.

Sometimes, despite the parents' best intentions, children eavesdropped on adult conversations and heard, What happened to Uncle Shlome? And the reply was, He was shot to death. The conversation continued, And where is Aunt Rivke? and the answer was, She was sent with her baby to the gas chamber in Auschwitz. When a child inadvertently hears about the deaths of family members this way, she does not comprehend the enormity of the destruction of European Jewry, but she does realize something is very wrong and has no way to process it.

Upon hearing about the suffering of the parents, it is not uncommon for the child to feel survivor guilt, wanting but unable to undo the parents' pain, rage, grief, and

helplessness. Ultimately, for such children to thrive as healthy, productive adults, these emotions need to be channeled into life-affirming behavior. This can take many forms, from raising consciousness about the Holocaust and other genocides to engaging in human rights advocacy to devoting one's life to the helping professions. Other paths to life-affirming behaviors include finding ways to facilitate the continuity of the Jewish people by learning about and bringing back the Jewish culture that was destroyed, studying Jewish texts, having a family, and helping to develop and support Jewish schools, synagogues, and communities.

In this special edition of *PRISM*, the retelling by each of the contributors of an episode from living with survivors is accompanied by a powerful and poignant drawing or painting by Nancy Patz, which sets the mood as the reader enters the life of these men and women. An overflowing kiddush cup at a *bris* (circumcision ceremony) in Poland in 1933 (p. 56) is reillustrated at another *bris* in 1954 (p. 58), in New Haven, Connecticut, where Arthur Myron Horwitz is given his name. Now, like other children of survivors, he has to live for two. Such sensitive and evocative artwork portrays the family histories as imbued with suffering and yet conveys hope for the future.

The representations in this volume show us that parents who survived massive psychic trauma are also prone to experience post-traumatic growth, which has as much influence on their descendants as post-traumatic stress. Despite contributors' consciousness of the historical trauma in Holocaust families that has influenced the children's identity and worldviews, their life-affirming works attest to the very vibrancy of their lives.

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Pnina Rosenberg

The Second Generation's Holocaust Legacy

The ocean that separates the USA from the Old World did not wash away the Holocaust survivors' refugee past. In their meager baggage, they carried memories, scars, different languages spoken in their home countries, and, above all, their traumatic losses. Some hoped that rebuilding their lives in the land of bounty and raising new families would help seal off the horrors and keep them, at least to an extent, from passing to their American offspring. Alas, their porous shield could not prevent the past from being transferred into the Second Generation's DNA, as so poignantly reflected in this volume.

Nancy Patz, a gifted artist, is best known as a children's book illustrator. In this special issue of *PRISM*, her delicate and expressive images, subdued pencil and ink drawings and watercolors, do not merely illustrate the texts but capture the core of the painful intergenerational dialogue. The marriage of the intimate confessional texts with the sensitive images creates a rich tapestry woven of threads of pain, regret, and compassion. Together, they reflect the belated revelations and the empathy and pity that Second Generation daughters and sons feel when we try to reach out and protect our parents from their inconceivable losses. Patz's perceptive eye and careful hand capture the soul and the essence of the testimony and leave abundant space for the reader to contemplate and imagine. A rich variety of motifs such as family scenes, portraits, religious relics, flowers, and mundane objects done in various techniques, such as minimalist ink drawing, expressive black brush strokes, subdued watercolor, and exploding colors, serves to help us visualize the evocative stories and testimonies.

With infinite tenderness, in one characteristic example, Patz accompanies the daughter–father relationship unfolded by Ellen R. Singer in the poignant narrative "Second Survivor." From the bottom right of the first page emerge violet and yellow flowers (p. 19), quiet blooms that seem to symbolize the tender, loving father who protects his daughter from his harsh experiences and sings to her, "You are my sunshine." In the next spread, an expressive ink brush depicts a dancing man with a smiling young girl, overlaid with pale yellow brush strokes that partly cover the facing page as well (pp. 20–21). The scene reflects the musical, light-footed father's ritual: as he readies his daughter for bed, she transforms her "nightclothes into a fancy ball gown," and he, in a makeshift tuxedo, twirls her around.

This joyful scene is a stark counterpoint to Singer's childhood. Her mother was severely traumatized by her experiences during the Holocaust and was institutionalized when Singer was only two years old. Her parents divorced, and her father, who assumed custody, was unable to care for her and placed her with relatives and eventually in a foster home until she was ten. At that time, he remarried and Singer rejoined him, but he sheltered her from the truth about her mother until she was an adult. Thus the veil of pale yellow brush strokes that partly covers the dancers and the accompanying text appears more ominous than bright and sunny; it seems to hide the truth about her biological mother and the experiences of her father, who "from the age of 13 . . . had survived each horrific phase of the Holocaust: ghetto, forced-labor camps, concentration camps, and a death camp, entirely on his own" (p. 21).

Gail Newman's "The Bridge" narrates a fragment of Newman's mother's internment experiences, transmitted to her while her mother was putting her dental bridge in a glass of water. The puzzled daughter did not know her mother had a bridge—nor about its connection to her mother's painful past. The intimate mother–daughter moment is rendered in a black ink drawing portraying in

its foreground the daughter, wearing a stripped outfit and seated against a black background, while the mother, seen from the back, is wearing white and seated in the midst of empty space, immersed in her ghostly past (p. 60). Thus, the daughter's black hole of ignorance is filled by her mother's spectral memories.

Patz is an attentive reader who looks for the right nuance and the appropriate shade to accompany both the texts that bleed and hurt and the ones filled with compassion and forgiveness. Her artistry adds another perspective from which to comprehend them.

I was born on a different continent and brought up in a different language and culture from many of the contributors to this anthology, yet the confessional prose and poetry resonate with aspects of my life as a daughter of survivors, who left Europe and tried to reestablish their lives from scratch, yet were unable to cut the bond with their painful past. They named me Pnina (Hebrew for Pearl) after my father's murdered sister, just like Ellen R. Singer in "Second Survivor," who is nicknamed Malkie after her father's twin sister, and Arthur Myron Horwitz, who tells us in "Namesake" that his Hebrew name, Avraham Meier, is that of his mother's baby brother. Even though I do not know any of the writers, part of their (hi)story is intertwined, embedded, and mirrored in mine. We, the Second Generation, are united by our parents' losses, by their immeasurable pain, a pain we tried to assuage.

Like many of the contributors to this volume, I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, a time when the world was not willing or prepared to listen to our parents' experiences. People often regarded survivors suspiciously, wondering why and how they had managed to live while so many did not. Thus our courageous mothers and fathers, who went through man-made hell yet did not lose their humanity, learned to keep their past to themselves or to share it only with other survivors. The texts in this book are illustrative of those survivors, who only gradually began to trust that they could reveal to their sons and daughters, usually many years later, fragments and glimpses of their past, and even then, sometimes only obliquely.

Through such anecdotal testimonies, contemporary readers become more intimately familiar with incidents in the lives of a variety of survivors and their children. Through the accompanying art, readers are prompted to consider the inner lives and thoughts of those who lived through the Holocaust and those who were born in its wake. The testimony and art offer an additional layer of understanding of survivors' post-Holocaust life and the lives of their children, who will soon be the sole living bearers of their Holocaust legacy.

Gloria Garfunkel

A Volume To Remind Us

"I would like just to be silent, but being silent, I lie."
—Jerzy Ficowski

To have the privilege of life, any life at all, descended from the remnants of a group of people of whom six million were dehumanized, tortured, and murdered, is both an honor and a heavy obligation. It means being born into a family in which one is fully aware, from an early age, of the very worst, meticulously calculated machinations human beings can inflict on each other out of pure hatred and a need to feel superior by birth to another group of people. We must be the voices of those who were silenced and disappeared, murdered simply for being Jewish.

Many of us one generation away from the Holocaust were raised either with dark parental silence or with vivid horror stories that gave us nightmares but were unspeakable to anyone else when we were children, back when there was no word for what had happened, what we now call the Holocaust. Instead, references were made to the six million, Nazis, Hitler, cattle cars, camps, Auschwitz, and gas chambers. These words pervaded often casual discussion, though unutterable outside of our families. We never mentioned these things to others. It was each family's secret legacy to bear so our parents could fit into the larger community without feeling shamed or pitied by their American Jewish friends.

This volume, focused on the voices of children of survivors, gives testimony to the diversity of ways in which second-generation trauma affected our lives. For me, one of the many ways was my fear of the scent of disinfectant in public bathrooms. I held my breath until I was sure others were acting normally, weren't dying of some sort of invisible poison gas in the air as did my maternal grandmother and her four youngest children. Such psychological trauma symptoms were wholly unrecognized by health professionals during my childhood. From an early age, I would get panic attacks, in bathrooms and elsewhere. When I tried to explain to our family doctor what I was feeling, I called the sensations "stomach aches," and the doctor reassured my mother that there was nothing wrong with me, that I was faking to get attention and she should just ignore me. It wasn't until we were adults ourselves that those of us in the second generation could speak out about how the Holocaust affected both us and our family, even to the third generation.

Now that many of us have our own children and grandchildren, we are fearful. We see a resurgence of antisemitism around the globe and, unlike our parents, who could never imagine such a thing before it occurred, we are familiar with the worst that can happen, and we live every day with that fear.

This anthology is a beautiful, haunting collection of tales exploring how the second generation was also victimized by the Holocaust. Unlike most books in this genre, which focus on the event itself, this one probes the details of post-Holocaust family lives, the absence of relatives, grandparents, aunts and uncles, people after whom we were named and of whom, mostly, we had no photographs. Many of us lived double lives, our own in America and another that carried the legacy of those whose names we had. We all had questions; some parents could never answer them and others could never stop talking.

This rich, special edition of *PRISM* offers testimonies of children of survivors and our secondhand experiences of the Holocaust, what some psychologists have called secondary posttraumatic stress disorder. The haunting voices and the stunning artwork within are as varied as the people. Though they have much in common, no two are alike.

We are markers in the world for the missing lives of those who never got to fully live, those we could never replace. We say, "never forget" the Holocaust. Here is a volume to remind us also never to forget how the ripples of that catastrophe still haunt the generations that follow.

Karen Shawn

A Tribute: Charles Adès Fishman

In the preface to the revised second edition of his monumental anthology *Blood to Remember*, Dr. Charles Adès Fishman (2007) writes that "as with all serious attempts to comprehend the destruction of the Jews of Europe, Holocaust poetry is a bridge between that which can be known and expressed and that which cannot." It enables us "to feel . . . to be wounded . . . and, though never entirely, to heal." Poetry, he writes, "is memory given voice, and it is prayer" (p. 31).

Charles has to his credit 12 books; more than 400 readings, published poems, and papers; countless awards; and a lively blog, and he is the internationally acclaimed poetry editor of Yeshiva University's *PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators*. The poems that he chooses for our journal, some of which appear in this volume, startle and amaze, and clarify and deepen our knowledge and our sense of the Holocaust (p. 31). He has written that such poems

> move us because their authors have been shaped by their relationships to, or their knowledge of, survivors and those who did not survive. The poets . . . are also witnesses, and in reading their poems, we feel, once again, the pain of remembering and knowing. . . . I believe it is also true that poetry can evoke the visceral and emotional reality of genocide through the poets' precise use of words, images, cadence, and silence, so that we feel and understand at the same time. The best poetry will not let us misrepresent the truth of our experiences and will honor the experiences of others—even the most traumatic ones. . . . It is my hope that the poems . . . will help us stand against denial, distortion, and erasure of history and for preservation of memory and context. I believe the poets represented here have revealed their own woundedness and have addressed their confusion, anger, and yearning with clarity and power. (2009, p. 7)

Our authors value the relationships they have forged with Charles over the years. Amos Neufeld, for instance, writes:

> Over his decades as an editor, Charles has consistently given so many of us poets a forum and a voice on the subject of the Shoah. When it comes to Holocaust poetry, there may be no editor who has done so much to nurture this body of work and enable it to grow and deepen. I will always be grateful to Charles and am so happy to add to this tribute to him. (personal correspondence)

This special edition would not exist without Charles's sensitive, painstaking work for our journal.

Carl Sandburg (1970) defined poetry as "the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits" ("Tentative [First Model] Definitions of Poetry," p. 319). We believe you will viscerally understand that definition after you read the works in this volume. We hope you will be touched by the delicate and rare spikes of beauty within them, and that you will be nourished and satisfied by their hard but necessary substance.

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Menachem Z. Rosensaft

The Second Generation

true, we are the children
of a nocturnal twilight
the heirs of Auschwitz and Ponar
but ours is also the rainbow
in us the storm meets sunlight
to create new colors
as we add defiant sparks
to an eternal fire

Elizabeth Rosner

My Father's Souvenirs

ONE.

A mustard-yellow tattered star, and
JUDE mimicking the Hebrew alphabet.
A rectangular patch for
a faded blue prison number.
A pale yellow file card with a
small, passport-size "mug shot"
of a fifteen-year-old boy with a newly shaved head
and protruding ears, a mouth held tightly closed
and wide, wide dark eyes.

TWO.

When I was eight years old,
my father came to my Hebrew school class.
He asked how many people
lived in our city; a few of us mumbled
uncertain guesses, no one knew.
He took a piece of chalk and wrote 80,000
on the board, said this was how many.
I thought about shopping malls and schools
and neighborhoods, about the vastness of my world.
Then he wrote another number on the board: 6,000,000.
I don't know what else he talked about that
Sunday morning, what stories he told;
I just remember
all those zeroes lined up against each other.

THREE.

In my eleventh-grade history class,
a room full of bored adolescents,
we are about to see a film and the teacher refuses,
for once, to tell us anything about it.
The projector hums and flutters, the room is dark
and full of whispers, giggles, chairs scraping the floor.
When I realize the film is *Night and Fog*,
my body stiffens. I have seen it before;
I know about the mass graves, piles of eyeglasses and
suitcases and shoes, the living skeletons
huddled behind barbed wire.
The film gets caught in the mechanism and begins
to flap and sputter; someone gets up
to fix it but I'm already out of my chair and
heading for the hall where I can lean against
the cold metal lockers and close my eyes.
It's the only way to stop myself
from wondering which emaciated face is his.

Hilary Tham

Daughter of Survivors

For Elaine, Helen, Myra

She is screaming again.
You stand at your bedroom door,
shivering; you will her to stop, will it
to go away. Your father's voice rises
and falls with the burden of her name.

She is awake. You hear her voice cling
to his. You hear the creak of bedsprings
as they rise.

Soon, the kettle whistles in the kitchen.
When you peer in, they are huddled together
over the table. Her pale hands clenched
around the teacup, she whispers her dream.

He has heard it six million times,
but he listens, his arm clamped around her.
He, too, has bad dreams.

You are afraid of this trembling woman
who replaces your mother each night —
you want the daylight woman
who bakes honey cake and brushes your hair,
smiling, as if you are her good dream.

Your father does not change at night,
but he, too, fears the knock on the door.
He makes you learn street maps
by heart, sends you out alone
on the New York subway

so that if you should come home from school
and find them missing, you would know
how and where to run.

Ellen R. Singer

Second Survivor

"Yet they who belong to the distant past are in us, serving as impetus, as a burden to our fate, as blood that can be heard rushing, as a gesture that rises up from the depths of time."
—Rainer Maria Rilke

No matter who we are, our life has a mind of its own, unwinding on a journey that unexpectedly turns messy now and then along the way. Its pathways twist and turn on a random course, while an emotional dance repeats itself with habitual regularity.

We are all born into an abiding story with a unique history of its own. I knew from the start that other families were not like mine. I am the sole offspring of two Holocaust survivors whose entire immediate families were annihilated by Hitler's Third Reich. Unlike typical American families, mine did not include grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins. The loss and absence of an extended family support system contributed to my primary learned emotions: depression, grief, guilt, and helplessness. Children of Holocaust survivors—the Second Generation, as we are known—are in secondary ways victims of the Nazi death camps, a victimhood different from that of their ancestors who experienced the horrors of the camps in the flesh. How could these survivors have raised children without transmitting to their offspring the traumas of their past? I speak only for myself when I say that my communal birthright has had a mixed yet long-lasting influence on my life, and I assume it has left a permanent impression and scars on the lives of many other second-generation offspring as well. No matter what direction my life takes in the time left ahead, I have learned a valuable lesson from the Holocaust and its effects. Ultimately, life's fickleness has changed me forever.

My biological parents met and were married in a displaced persons camp following World War II. After they came to America, the toll the war had taken on my mother unfortunately became clear. She was institutionalized when I was about two years of age, and their marriage ended in divorce. My father assumed custody of me and placed me with relatives and in foster homes until I was 10 years old. At that time, he married a woman who was not a survivor, and I was raised by her. He sheltered me from the truth about my biological mother until adulthood. Sadly, after learning it and meeting her, I moved out of the state and was unable to develop a relationship with her before she died.

Long past the time of innocence, I continued to hold fast to my childhood belief that families endure forever. I continued to adore my father as I did when I was a little girl. He meant everything to me. I wanted to do everything for him, if only to remove the grimace from his face, the slump from his walk, the sadness from his eyes, and the eerie stillness from his voice, all of which I often didn't see, failed to understand, or chose to ignore. These melancholy mannerisms, which surfaced now and then, seemed to belong to someone I only thought I knew.

An unusual man, he spoke softly, in a thick European accent. No matter how hard he tried to overcome his greatest language difficulties, he always pronounced "W" as "V" and imperfectly vocalized "th," saying "Marta" instead of "Martha." Talented in so many ways, he invented, constructed, and repaired anything and everything. When I cried and cried about my broken *Susie Walker* doll, he made her new and whole again. He was musical and light-footed, crooning to me like Perry Como as he readied me for bed. I transformed my nightclothes into a fancy ball gown while he, in a makeshift tuxedo, twirled me around. His dance steps mimicked Fred Astaire's and he turned me into his glamorous partner, Ginger. We danced along to Perry Como's recording of *Catch a Falling Star.*

"Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, never let it fade away. Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, save it for a rainy day. . . ." And each time he sang the song, he placed a coin in my piggy bank.

"Always save your pennies, Malkie. You'll never know when they might save your life." Although my Hebrew name is Esther, Dad sometimes called me by the nickname Malkie, a diminutive of the name Malka. In his understanding, Malkie meant "little queen" rather than "little Malka." I believe that this was in remembrance of his fraternal twin sister, who was killed in the Holocaust.

On special Saturday nights, after a welcome taste of schnapps, he took out his cut-rate harmonica. He held it gently and blew into it softly as if his breath were touching a woman for the very first time. A self-taught yet satisfactory musician, he played for me the only two songs he knew well: *Hatikva* (the Israeli national anthem) and *You Are My Sunshine*, the only American tune he had memorized and the only melody he had ever mastered on his harmonica. His rendition of *Sunshine* made me feel warm inside. I loved his mellow, exotic baritone voice and the words of that playful song, but above all, I loved the lyrics. He wasn't one for saying, "I love you," but I always heard the sentiment through the lyrics of that song.

"You know the words, Malkie," he said, but I always preferred him to sing the homespun, schmaltzy lyrics, and I made him sing them again and yet again: "You are my sunshine, / My only sunshine. / You make me happy / When skies are gray. / You'll never know, dear, / How much I love you. / Please don't take my sunshine away."

Some of my favorite memories bring to mind times when we dressed up in whatever finery we could muster and pretended to be rich American folks. When he could afford it, we went to Radio City Music Hall to see the Rockettes. On those Sundays, we ate hot, tasty knishes with mustard at Katz's Delicatessen and drank Dr. Brown's black cherry soda to wash them down. Although I finally got used to it, it sometimes bothered me when he ate so quickly and with such an incredible gusto, allowing mustard to flow down the sides of his mouth and potato filling to stick to the sides of his cheeks.

On occasion, when he worked overtime and money wasn't a problem, we shamelessly stuffed ourselves even further with something expensive, sweet, and gooey. I usually chose a chocolate sundae topped with whipped cream, sprinkles, and a maraschino cherry. From time to time, he mentioned America's abundance and extravagant attitudes concerning food and compared them to the starvation that had been rampant in Europe not long before.

"What about the poor children, Daddy?" I asked. "What did they have to eat?" He had no answers for me back then. He rarely talked much about his life during those days, and quite frankly, I wasn't especially interested in them at the time.

Despite the despair of a man who suffered immensely, if silently and secretly, his entire life, he presented himself to the world as a friendly, cheerful, and down-to-earth immigrant. Everyone liked him: Jews and non-Jews alike; men and also women; coworkers, union reps, and bosses; shopkeepers and government officials; old people, children, and babies. Even dogs and cats seemed to take a fancy to him. Little did I know that my one-sided optimistic portrayal of the man I once called Daddy corresponded to a profound and darker side.

The story of his life unfolded piecemeal. I can't remember a time when I didn't have at least a dim awareness of his experiences of organized hate and mistreatment, but it was only through fragmentary knowledge and isolated details. Although I can't precisely remember the first time I heard the terms "Nazis," "concentration camps," and mass murder, I do recall my formative years being consumed by a curiosity about the Holocaust that exceeded the normal boundaries of childhood inquisitiveness. At a tender age, I doubt that I possessed the emotional or intellectual capacity to conceptualize images such as gas chambers or numbers as great as six million. At this time, the extent of my knowledge about the Holocaust amounted to Dad's concise, watered down, and dispassionate accounts.

"There were some bad people in Germany and Poland who didn't like Jews, just because they were Jews. So they hurt them."

"Will these bad men come here and hurt me, too?"

"No, Malkie. That was a long time ago and it was far away from here. We live in a free country and are safe here in America."

When I asked him why he had *KL* tattooed on his right forearm and also asked, "Did it hurt when the needle went through your skin?" he flippantly countered with, "It wasn't any worse than going to the dentist." My wide-eyed expression displayed complete astonishment!

"Daddy, why did your family die and you live? Why didn't God come and save them, too?"

Dad answered, "The last time I saw my mother alive, Malkie, she said this to me: 'Avram, you are young, you are strong, and you are smart. Of all my children, you will be the one to live and tell the world what they did to us.' She was right, Malkie. I was strong and I survived, but I never will ever be able to talk about what they did to us."

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He did not face me directly, but continued, "I refused to let them destroy me. Somehow I found the strength to suffer the hardships and come out alive when no one else in the family was able to or lucky enough. I survived to be your daddy, Malkie. That's all I can tell you. That's all I know. Enough questions now. *Genug iz genug* [enough is enough]!"

From the age of 13 until the conclusion of the war, he had survived each horrific phase of the Holocaust: ghetto, forced-labor camps, concentration camps, and a death camp, entirely on his own. As I matured, I realized that he had protected me, for his benefit as well as for mine, from something more heinous than I could ever have imagined. How could a young, naive American girl make sense out of the knowledge of such an evil world? Without much help from him, I was left to work through his unfinished business and make it my own.

My father lived a productive, American life, yet he continued to keep his secrets buried, even from me. In his 60s, a strong and resonant inner voice emerged. He spent his remaining years lecturing to high school and college students about the Holocaust. At age 82, my father succumbed to melanoma. Although I continue to have unanswered questions about his life, I have been able to make peace with the "unknowing."

Elizabeth Rosner

Anything

The Swedes who knew you after
the war tell me you were lucky because
you got out in time. I can't think what
they mean at first until I realize they
think you didn't survive what you
survived, they think you didn't ever
get sent to a camp, and I can't think why
they think that until I realize
maybe you didn't talk about it then,
when it was so recent you still
woke sometimes in the night thinking
it was time to be counted again.
Maybe you thought it was so obvious
it didn't need to be said out loud,
when the fact that all of your bones
showed through your clothing
seemed to speak for itself. Didn't it?
I tell them they must not mean
what they mean, tell them
you were there, in Buchenwald, for
the last year of the war, and they say
No, he wasn't, we would have
known that, and I say, Yes, of course
he was, I should know, I'm his daughter.
And we sit silently around their dining
room table, trying to understand how
such a thing could be forgotten, or mis-
taken, or kept a secret. I keep thinking
about that picture of you with Mom
just after you'd met in Stockholm
where you're both standing on some
seashore with the wind blowing so hard
that the legs of your pants are pressed
against your ankles that look like
a young girl's ankles they're so terribly
thin and fragile. And I don't understand anything
about anything.

Gail Newman

Night Terror

1.
I've never killed anyone
or held a weapon,
yet sometimes I hear
in my head
the blast of gunfire.

My mother opens a drawer
and takes out a small blue box —

my father's wedding ring,
a broad gold band,

but where are the hands, the knuckles
and knobby wrists, the torso, the long toes?

Where is my father's chest?
Where is his heart?

2.
Some nights I wake to hear
my father crying out like a child —
night terrors —
then his slippers
brushing the floor
down the long hall,
walking past my room,
out of the apartment
into darkness that pools
around his feet like a river.

For hours, he sits
under the silence of the stars.

Then he comes back
into the house —

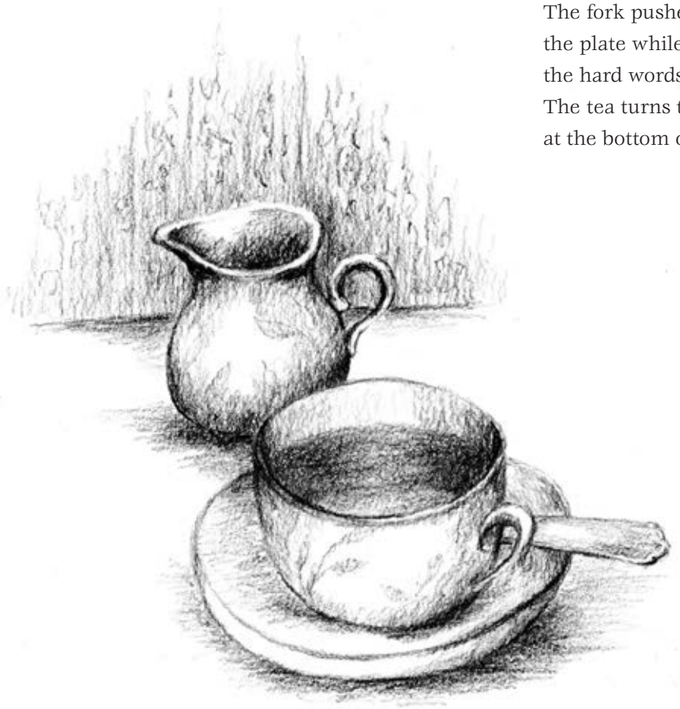
the clean table
covered with a yellow cloth,

the light of the moon shining through
the kitchen window
onto the red eyes of the clock.

Gail Newman

Hunger

Some days at the table,
my father's hand is slow
to bring bread to his mouth.
He is inside the telling of his story,
his body far away, hidden under a mattress,
jumping off a train into snow,
hiding potatoes in his pockets.
We dug a trench. Then we filled it up.
Every day. Marching there and back
until it was dark. We ate cold soup,
not soup, water. Nothing.
The fork pushes food around
the plate while my father swallows
the hard words. The eggs cool.
The tea turns tepid, milk pooling
at the bottom of the cup.



Amos Neufeld

The Burning Sun

For my father, Ernest

I think of all the conversations we
never had — a sunless void waiting to be
filled — a hurt that did not heal — just your silence
and a boy trying to understand that distance —

a hard place I could not enter. A dark
landscape of losses — never lit by you — the stark
difficult years we crossed alone — longing
to feel your arm on my shoulder, going
back home together to where everything once was —
a paradise of sunlight on olive trees,
Jerusalem at night in starlight — not left behind —
your dreams not ended — there was more to find.

I would wait forever to feel your arm around
me, walking back home into the burning sun.

Sandra Silver

Secrets

Both my parents were Holocaust survivors. Together they survived a total of eight ghettos, labor camps, and concentration camps. Both my parents experienced many horrors, but they survived, met in a DP camp in Germany, and married. I was born two years later. They immigrated to the United States to provide a better life for us all.

My mother never discussed her Holocaust experiences with me. She came from a place with many secrets. We did not have the typical after-school parent–child conversations:

"So, what did you do in school today?"

"Do you have any homework?"

"Do you need any help?"

Growing up, I had no real parental guidance. There was a big gap between us. My mother barely understood the English language and American culture, so how could she pass on all the little words of wisdom that children need in order to learn life's lessons?

"Work hard and you can accomplish whatever you want."

"Always do your work first, and then you can have fun!"

She could not. I had to learn life lessons on my own.

My mother and I had no real emotional connection either. Of course, I understand now that she was just trying to protect me from her horrific past. On some level, I knew she loved me, but she was unable to express feelings. All her emotions had been drained from her during the Holocaust, which probably, on some level, had helped her to survive. The saddest part of this for me was that I never heard the words "I love you" from her. She seemed unable to say them

As I grew older, I tried to understand her history and her odd personality traits. For example, she was always quick to react to the slightest issue. Most situations, no matter how benign, would result in her raising her voice; everything became a crisis. For fear of her mood swings, I was hesitant to have friends visit. What would they think of me? Would they still want to be my friend? Peer relationships in middle and high school are crucial; my mother's unpredictable volatility limited mine.

Her emotional growth was stunted as well. Even if she did not talk about her experiences, her anger and pain about them came out in other ways, usually directed at me. I remember a breakfast when I was about 10 years old. I had refused to eat the cold cereal she had prepared and put in front of me. I'm sure that I had insisted that she purchase this particular sugary brand at the store, but when I tried it that morning, I could barely get it down my throat and told her I would not eat it. I will never forget the shock I felt when she picked up the bowl of cereal and milk and poured it over my head. Stunned, I wiped my face, ran to my bedroom, and cried for quite a while. From my mother, there was never any discussion about this event; there was never an apology. I found myself day-dreaming that maybe she was not my real mother, that my real parents would eventually come and get me.

By the time I was in my teens, though, I realized that my mother was suffering, that all her Holocaust experiences were still inside her. At 16, I was worried about what to wear to a school dance. When my mother was 16, she was cramped in a small room with 25 other people in the Benzin/Bedzin Ghetto in Poland. She didn't want to see me hurting and being sad about her life, so she thought it would be better to keep everything bottled up, to keep her experiences secret. She was wrong.

As difficult as these parts of my life were, I recognized that my parents worked very hard to make sure they provided us with a comfortable life that included all the material possessions and opportunities they had lost during the Holocaust. I had a sister and brother, twins born six years after my parents emigrated. For all of us, my parents stressed the importance of school and encouraged study and, later, advanced degrees. We had generous allowances and access to the family cars as we needed them.

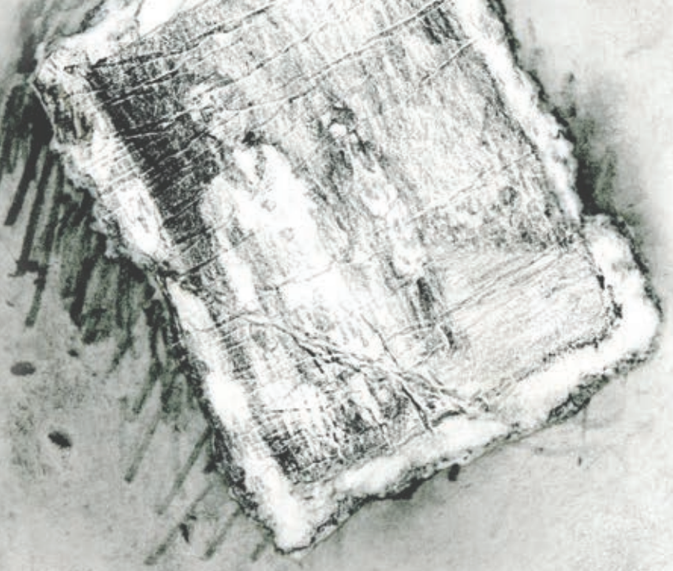
As I pursued a social work degree in college and spent time in therapy, I was able to sort out and process my issues with my mother and move to a better place of understanding and an improved relationship with her.

Finally, when as an adult I assisted my mother with completing her reparation applications, I uncovered some of the secrets she had withheld, and my feelings towards her began to change and soften still more. I learned that she had lost a child before I was born; that she had endured three work camps; that she had been forced to make bullets and then work in a kitchen; that she was the sole survivor out of seven siblings. Memories of this painful past affected each day of her present. In an effort to protect us from the knowledge of her anguish, she had kept these memories to herself, secret, an unimaginable burden.

I often ask myself how I would have dealt with all this if her life had happened to me. I wonder whether I would have survived and processed the Holocaust as she did. I wonder whether I would try to shelter my children and, in the process, remain wounded.

As I changed and softened towards my mother, she, too, became a different woman as she aged, perhaps because many of her secrets were no longer festering inside of her. Living to the age of 96, she was able to enjoy her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren and was very attached to them all. Though I felt while growing up that I could never meet their high expectations or receive any praise, both my parents were very openly proud of their grandchildren's accomplishments and made sure they attended all the special events in their lives, no matter where and when they were. As healthy as I knew it was that my mother was able to be open and affectionate with my children, I must admit it was very difficult for me to watch her and my father smother them with love, unconditionally. Because they lived nearby, my parents would come over every day to visit and were always able to say to them, with no hesitation, "I love you."

I'm glad that my children and grandchildren knew a different mother from the one I knew. The new word I use when I talk about my mother now is "forgiveness."



Marge Piercy

How She Learned

A friend was an only child, she thought
until she sorted through her mother's things
after the frail old woman died. Her mother
had borne Anna late in life, a miracle,
a blessing, she was always told. Then

Anna found a greying photograph.
Her aunt who escaped Poland
in '37 had saved and given it
to her younger sister who barely
survived Nordhausen working inside

the mountain, skinny, almost-ghost.
Anna recognized her mother, decades
younger, but against her side was
pressed a girl not Anna. Scrawled
on the back, *Feygelah und Perl*.

Who was Feygelah? Her aunt bore
only sons. This girl was four or five
with long light braids, her legs
locked together in a shy fit. Who?
There were letters back and forth

Boston to Krakow. She sat reading
them, puzzling out the handwriting,
the Yiddish. She had a dictionary,
but even then, it took her late into
the evening. Anna had a sister.

A sister vanished into smoke.
A sister torn from her mother,
murdered, burnt. Anna sat numb.
She was the replacement for
a girl whose name her mother

could not speak. The weight
of history pressed on Anna's chest
that night and finally she wept —
mourning the sister never known
and her mother's decades of silence.

Esther Feinberg

Ask a Question

Ask a question, expect an answer
It seems so simple

Where were you when they came?
Where was your wife
Where were your boys
    your brothers and sister
    father,
    aunts,
    uncles,
    cousins,
There were so many

Did you see them take your sons —
    they were only babies
What were their names?
Why didn't you ever tell me their names?

    I wanted to know, but how could I ask?

Maybe you didn't want to remember
Maybe it hurt too much
Maybe you didn't know how to be
    a father in mourning and
    a father with hope
    for his daughters' future
Maybe no one does

Did you say *kaddish*?
I never heard you
Maybe it was silent, as you often were

    I wanted to know, but how could I ask?

Everyone knows about the camps
    what they looked like
    how cold and dirty —
Everyone knows you had to work hard
    eat little
    suffer beatings
    and watch others suffer even
    to their deaths
Everyone knows you had no choices
and we know you survived —
but how?

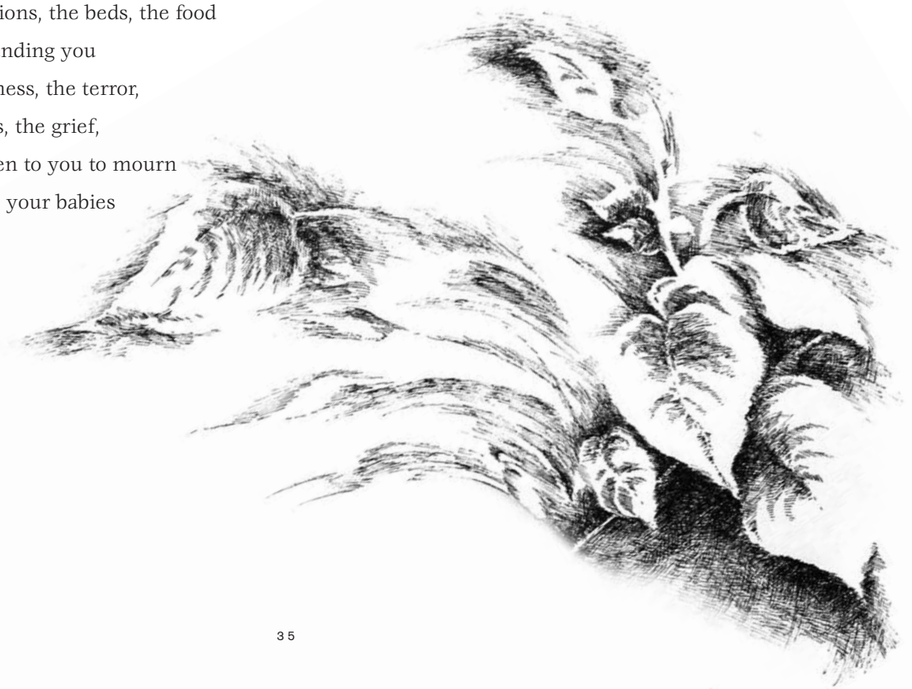
    I wanted to know, but how could I ask?

Tell me about the conditions, the beds, the food
    the death surrounding you
Tell me about the loneliness, the terror,
    the hopelessness, the grief,
    the time not given to you to mourn
    your loved ones, your babies

    I wanted to know, but
    I didn't know how to ask

Ask a question, expect an answer
It seems so simple
But I didn't just have one question, or two, or ten

    I wanted to know you
    but how could I ask?



Suzanna Eibuszyc

My Mother's Scars Became My Scars

My very first knowing is the vivid memory of the sensation of fear. I was born being afraid. I believe the Holocaust left in its path a darkness and despair that enveloped both survivors and their children, those born in its aftermath, as I was. I am convinced that the terror my mother experienced was passed on to me through the sinewy strands of chemical inheritance known as genes.

I remember an image from when I was a baby in a stroller under a big tree. I wake up from a nap. I am alone, my only companion the canopy of leaves that move gently above me in the soft wind. The breeze soothes me, but I am scared. I sense that my mother is not with me and somehow know that I need her if I am to survive.

I experienced this fear for my survival repeatedly throughout my childhood. Once, my mother became physically ill and was taken to the hospital. My father learned quickly that as much as he tried, I could not accept him as a substitute for Mother, and our home life was anguished as my father, sister, and I waited, desperate for her to return.

I remember vividly the trauma I experienced as a five-year-old when our city of Ziebice, Poland, held army maneuvers in the city square, right in front of our house. Although I understood that they were just exercises, showing off what the Polish army could do, I was inconsolable. I often wonder whether my oversensitivity to the sounds of gunfire and tanks rolling through the streets that day had something to do with my mother's surviving the bombing of Warsaw 15 years earlier. Were those sounds already familiar to me; were they part of my inherited genetic memory, passed down to me from my mother?

I was six years old when my mother took me to an art exhibit that came to our town. The exhibit was a tribute to mothers and children who suffered during the war. The art was frightening: It showed SS soldiers ripping children from mothers' arms, mothers being killed, and mothers begging for mercy. I was overwhelmed, not so much by the art, horrific as it was, but by the tears my mother shed as we walked through the gallery.

When I think back to that day, I realize my mother had no idea the exhibit would be as disturbing as it was. She also probably thought I was too young to understand what I would see. The next morning, still lying in bed, I had a hallucination. SS soldiers were standing on each side of my bed. I knew I was not allowed to move. If I did, I was sure, they had orders to shoot me. I remained motionless, afraid to take a breath until my mother came looking for me.

That morning, my mother came to my rescue. I never burdened her with my daydream, though, because I remembered how she had cried as we walked through the exhibit and because I wanted to protect her.

My mother lived with the ghosts of her vanished family. Her decision to run away from Warsaw after the German invasion haunted her all her life. As a young woman of 22, she had said goodbye to her entire family thinking she would be back in a few weeks. To stay alive, she had to keep going east into the unknown on trains crammed with other refugees. Rather than returning home, she found herself deep in Stalinist Russia, far from family, full of remorse and regret. It was a decision, though, that saved her life.

She often talked about this large and loving family she had lost, but I never saw any photographs that connected her to them or proved that they had once lived. From my viewpoint, there was never any evidence that my mother's family had ever actually existed. Throughout my childhood, I grieved with my mother, although in truth, I could not comprehend how her family could have simply disappeared. I was frightened and confused when

she told us stories about her parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, and also ashamed, because I did not believe her stories. As a child, I remember my mother mourning her five nieces and nephews. "So young and innocent, they should be among the living," is what she repeated. I tried to understand how they could have vanished, Adek, Sala, Anja. . . . In order for my child's mind to reconcile something I could not comprehend, I decided that my mother had made this family up.

Often my mother's gloom was too intense for me, but I continually found myself being pulled back into her world despite myself. Even as a small child, I found a way to protect myself when I imagined my life was in danger by withdrawing and retreating into my world. I would exile myself and build walls of protection around myself. I found this protection under our large kitchen table, covered by a crisp, white tablecloth that reached to the floor. I remember having an abnormal fear of people who came to our home often. I hid in my sanctuary and would not come out until they departed and the world was safe again. Under the table I felt safe and protected; no harm could come to me there. As a child in post-war Poland, countless times I had to watch our friends and neighbors pack their belongings and leave. From those early experiences, I learned that friendships were short-lived and that nothing around us was permanent. In that respect, our life after the war was oddly similar to my mother's description of life during the war.

I always knew about the Holocaust. As far back as I can remember, my mother shared her stories with me. The tales she told filled me with overwhelming sadness, but they also brought color to my drab existence in south-western Communist Poland. My mother's childhood in Poland, her survival during the war, and her life after the Holocaust became part of me. I grew up in a home where my sister and I lived, day by day, haunted by a deep and inexplicable knowledge of my parents' experiences. Their psychic injuries, their traumas were transmitted to us, the second generation. I absorbed my mother's abandonment and helplessness and I felt her fears and resignation. I lived with her habits, where every crumb of bread was precious, where fear of being cold was magnified, and where suspicion of others and secretiveness and mistrust watched over how she interacted with the outside world. Her scars became my scars. Her knowing became mine.

Amos Neufeld

What Would Heal You?

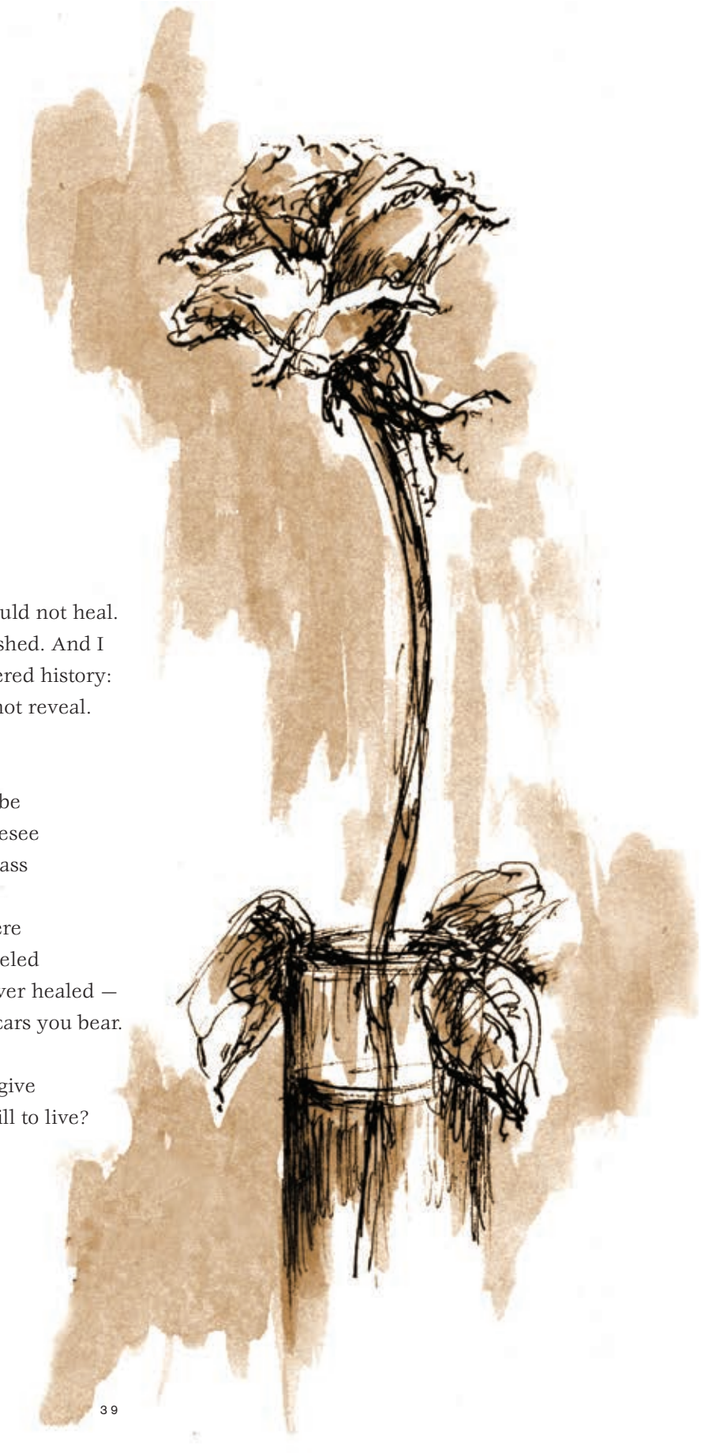
For my father, Ernest Neufeld

Though you survived, your scars of war would not heal.
Too much you'd known and loved had perished. And I
could not heal you — nor mend your shattered history:
orphaned, carrying worlds lost you would not reveal.

What did I know about unbearable loss?
You, who once escaped from slave labor to be
with your dying mother, how could you foresee
cattle cars, human freight, destined for a mass

grave in the teeming wound of sky? You were
helpless to save your parents from an unkeeled
world of pain, a wound unbounded that never healed —
flesh torn from earth whose screams and scars you bear.

Father, you risked your life, but did you forgive
yourself: that you survived — sought the will to live?



Alan Kaufman

My Mother Doesn't Know Who Allen Ginsberg Is

"Ginsberg?" she asks by phone. "Is that your
friend from Israel?"

"He's a famous poet," I explain. "I've been invited
with him and Kathy Acker to a Jewish festival
in Berlin."

"Acker," says my mother, her voice cross.
"This is a Jewish name?"

My mother doesn't know
who Allen Ginsberg is.
She doesn't know who Anne
Waldman is, or Charles Bukowski.
My mother doesn't know that I make
a kind of living on stages
screaming my heart out
to strangers at five hundred dollars a pop,
and that there's some debate about whether
or not what I and others like me do should
be considered poetry. My mother was arrested by
the Gestapo in 1942.

She was twelve then. She's sixty now.
She lives in Florida,
where every so often a German tourist gets shot.

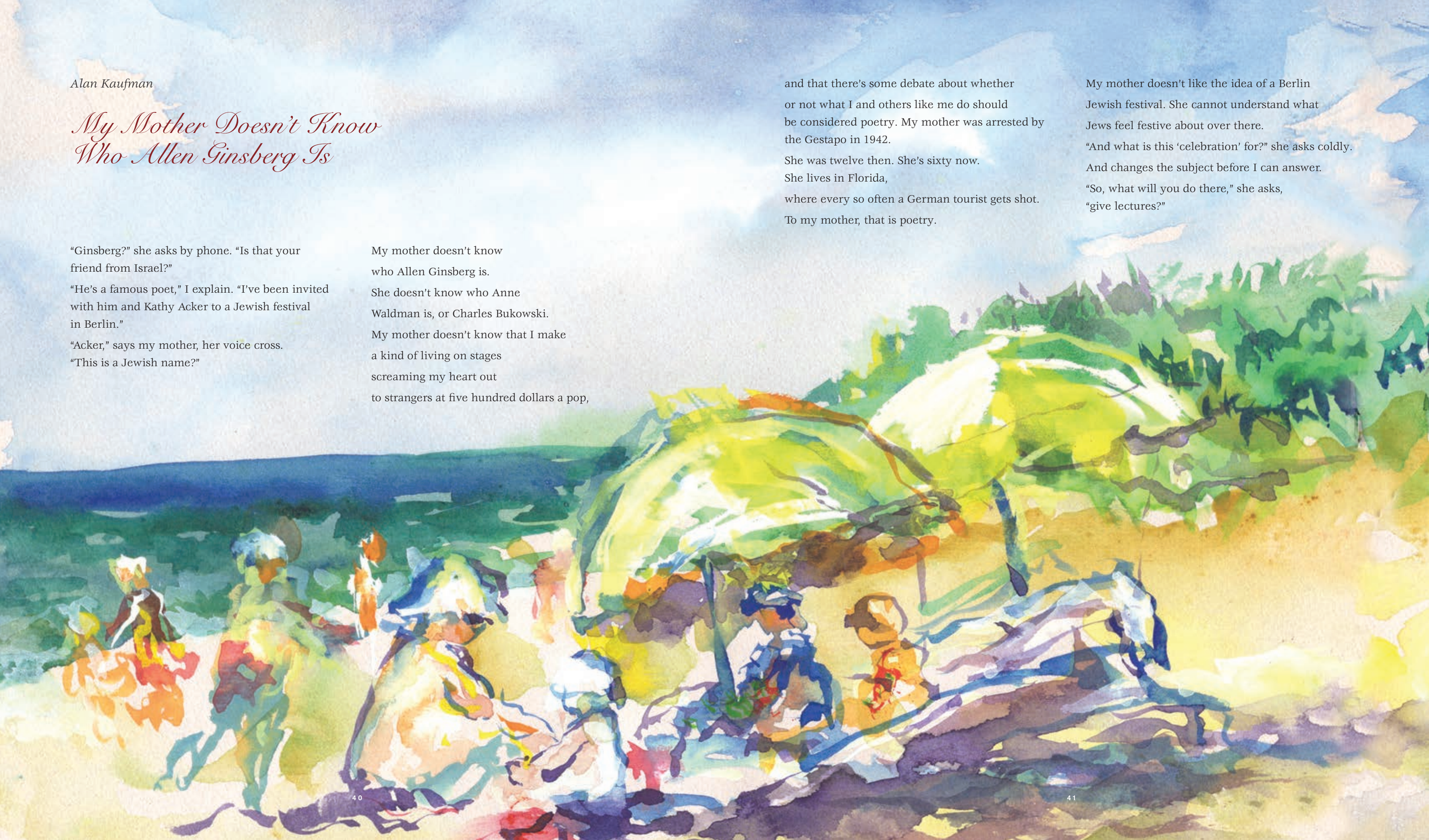
To my mother, that is poetry.

My mother doesn't like the idea of a Berlin
Jewish festival. She cannot understand what
Jews feel festive about over there.

"And what is this 'celebration' for?" she asks coldly.

And changes the subject before I can answer.

"So, what will you do there," she asks,
"give lectures?"



"We'll read our works," I say, "talk in panel discussions."
"Talk?" she says. "In English, I hope!"
My mother doesn't like the sound of German.
"It's a funny thing," she says. "I see the tourists
on the beach, in their bathing suits . . . What could
be more harmless? But when I hear them speak, I
imagine them in uniforms, and become afraid."
My mother sees Germans in bathing suits
transformed into Germans in uniform,
and my mother fears that having once
narrowly missed killing her, they might yet succeed
in killing me. As a child in war, she saw such things
as babies tossed through the air and shot.
"Like crying angels, they looked," she says.

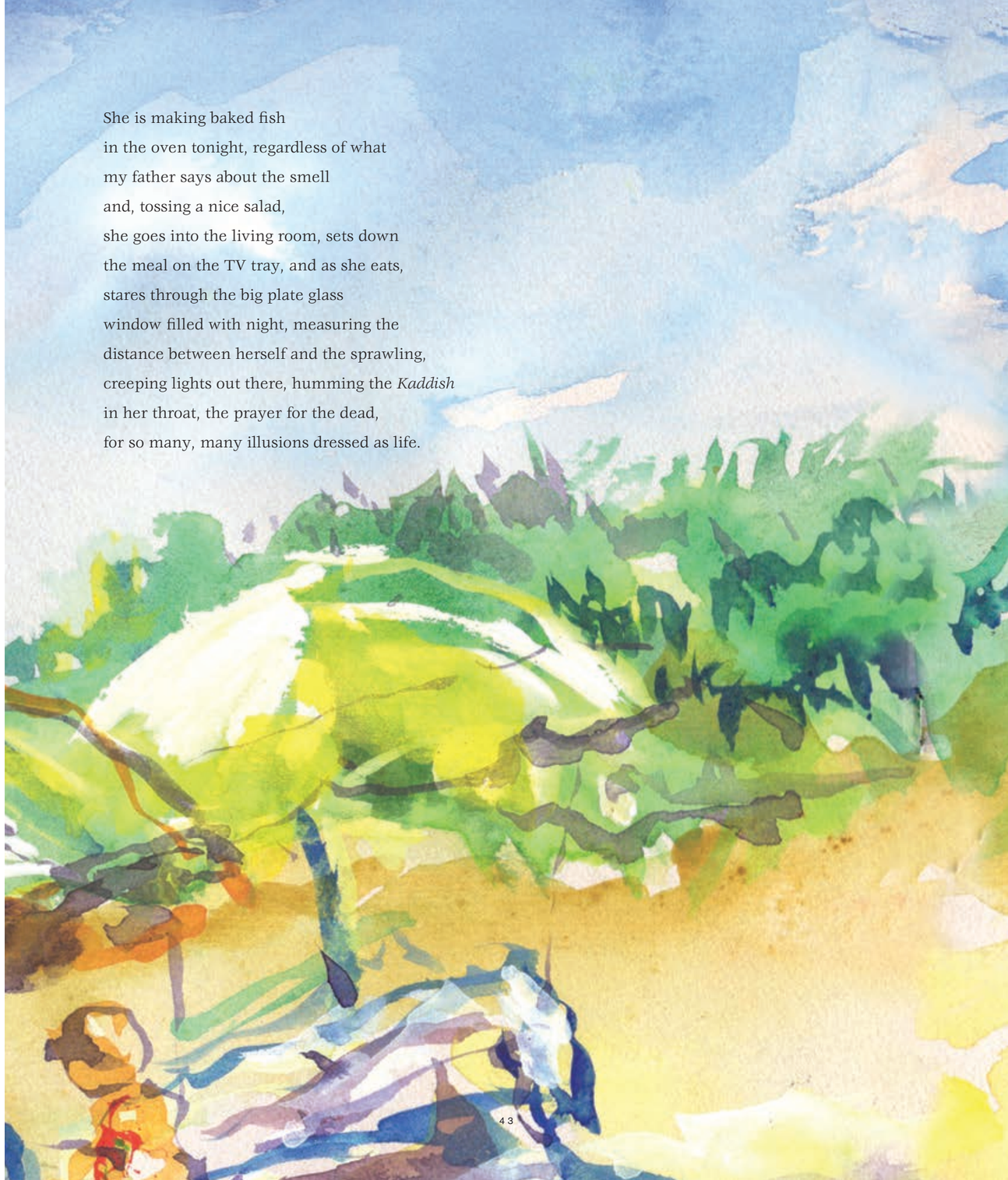
My mother doesn't know who Allen Ginsberg is.
She watches German tourists sun themselves
on the shore. Sometimes they don uniforms
of German language, march to her condo,
call up through the intercom and order
her downstairs with one suitcase containing
six kilos of clothing, and food
for a journey of three days.

My mother doesn't know who
Allen Ginsberg is
and I wonder if she knows who
Alan Kaufman is.
She can't understand
why any Jew would ever
want to go to Germany.

My mother doesn't know who
Allen Ginsberg is. She looks older
than her years
but younger than the death she
still manages to escape
in retirement on the beaches
of Florida, where there are not too many
roundups for the camps, and one is safe,
generally speaking, if one stays indoors,
pretends not to be a Jew, even
to other Jews.

My mother doesn't know
who Allen Ginsberg is.
She has tended to regard most
"high" culture
as a kind of Disneyworld
for intelligent people —
to her, the three bolt locks
on her door are more important
than the collected works of Shakespeare.
She knows that she's supposed
to appreciate books and pretends
to, but my mother doesn't know who
Norman Mailer is, she doesn't know who
Maya Angelou is, she doesn't know who
wrote *On the Road* or *Leaves of Grass* or *The Awful Rowing Toward God*.
She has seen six million of the best minds
of her generation gassed and burned.

She is making baked fish
in the oven tonight, regardless of what
my father says about the smell
and, tossing a nice salad,
she goes into the living room, sets down
the meal on the TV tray, and as she eats,
stares through the big plate glass
window filled with night, measuring the
distance between herself and the sprawling,
creeping lights out there, humming the *Kaddish*
in her throat, the prayer for the dead,
for so many, many illusions dressed as life.



Annette Bialik Harchik

Chana

All brave women are named Chana.
The Bible shows all of them to be
courageous, self-sacrificing,
even defiant.
Consider the variations:
Ann, Anita, Grace, Hannah, Nancy, Nina.

The Chanas of my mother's time were
no exception:
from one who birthed her only child
under a Warsaw bridge the night
the beasts burned the Jewish ghetto,
to a parachutist whose defiance
awed her captors,
to Chana Bialik, who shielded
her eldest daughter against Nazi bullets
in their self-dug ditch.

Today I carry her name.
But I am not brave. I have no children.

Gregg Shapiro

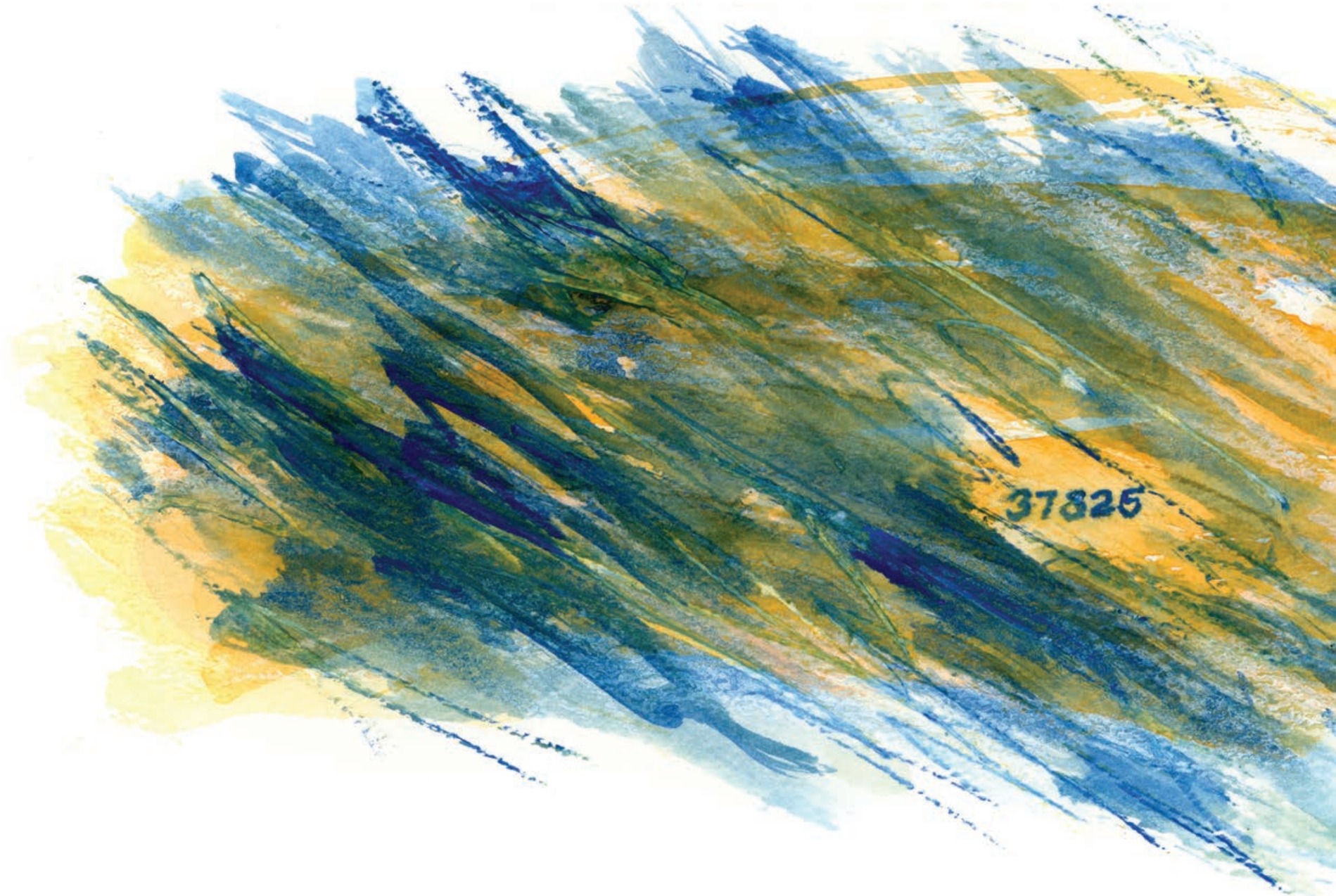
Tattoo

My father won't talk about the numbers
3-7-8-2-5 between the wrist and elbow
blue as blood on his left forearm
Instead, he spreads himself over me
spilling his protection, like acid, until it burns
I wear him like a cloak, sweat under the weight

There were stories in the lines on his face
the nervous blue flash in his eyes
his bone-crushing hugs
I am drowning in his silence
trying to stay afloat on curiosity
Questions choke me and I swallow hard

We don't breathe the same air
speak the same language
live in the same universe
We are continents, worlds apart
I am sorry my life has remained unscathed
His scars still bleed, his bruises don't fade

If I could trade places with him
I would pad the rest of his days
wrap him in gauze and velvet
absorb the shocks and treat his wounds
I would scrub the numbers from his flesh
extinguish the fire and give him back his life



Elizabeth Rosner

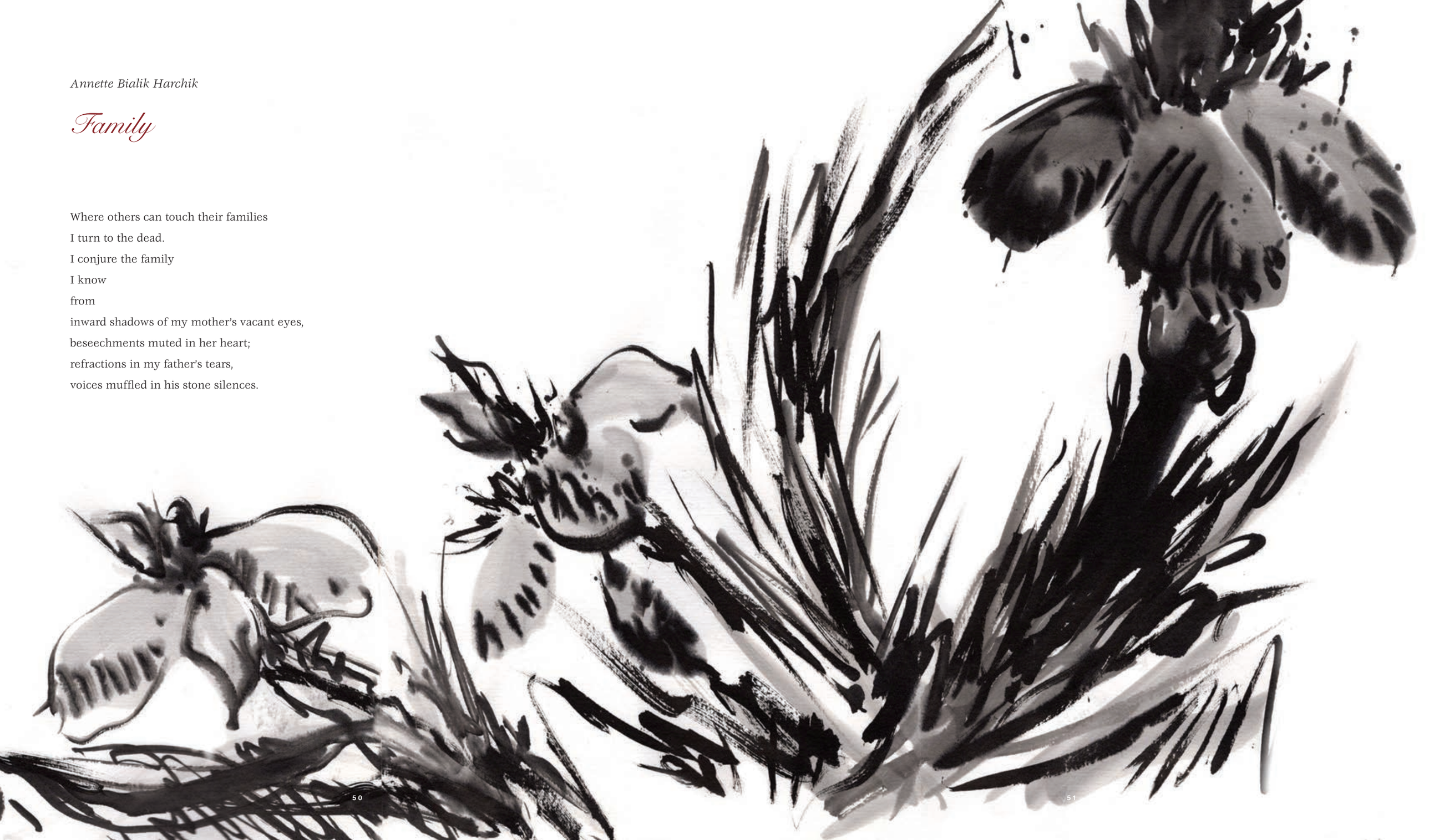
Chocolate

My father hoards it,
needs a stash of dark
nougat hidden in shoeboxes
on high closet shelves, under
piles of winter hats, behind
unmatched socks, trapped
between old bills and
unanswered letters.
Instead of lint or loose
change, his pockets store
gold and silver foil:
the shed skin of secret feasting
against the memory of hunger.

Annette Bialik Harchik

Family

Where others can touch their families
I turn to the dead.
I conjure the family
I know
from
inward shadows of my mother's vacant eyes,
beseechments muted in her heart;
refractions in my father's tears,
voices muffled in his stone silences.



Freida Harris

The Flavor of Freedom

No, I have never known hunger, but I cannot waste food. Waste is not in my vocabulary, and food—well, that has a status all its own. I see my mother standing by the sink, peeling a potato. No, she does not use a peeler. She is sure that it would cut away some of the precious white flesh. A black eye, or a bruise—it is sacrilegious, criminal, to hack away the blemish. Slowly, layer by layer, she removes the offending spot. Meticulously she cuts, like a skilled surgeon removing a cataract, always conscious that if he digs too deeply, he will blind his patient.

On occasion, if I yell at her to cut a bigger chunk of the spoilage away, she will again relate the story of the best meal she ever ate. It was made of blackened potato peels and a *traif* (non-kosher) ox tail that she found while searching in the trash cans of Lódź in 1945. It was the first meal she was able to cook after her release from the camps. It had a "*taam* of *Gan Eden*"—a taste of the Garden of Eden.

While she will not waste a morsel of white flesh, neither will she stoop to eat a spot of black. This is America, the country of great bounty.

She stands patiently by the sink, ministering to her precious potatoes, counting out exactly how many she will need. She bathes them gently and places them in a pot to boil.

I never eat potatoes.

Menachem Z. Rosensaft

A Refusal to Forgive the Death

whom should I forgive?
why should I forgive?
how can I forgive?

children

hundreds
of children

thousands
thousands upon thousands
of children

hundreds of thousands
of children

more than one million children

starved
beaten
typhus-ridden
shot
hanged
gassed

but I see
one child
only one child
always one child
always the same child

a five-and-a-half-year-old boy
Benjamin

my mother's son
my mother's child
his ashes diffused
toward the stars
almost three years
before I was born

once upon a time
my brother
used to laugh
used to play
used to sing
used to have
tomorrows

but that was before

before the train
before arrival
at a place
with a German name
before one last hug
one last kiss
before he went
with his father
and grandparents
into a blackness
without end

whom should I forgive?
why should I forgive?
how can I forgive?

Arthur Myron Horwitz

Namesake

It was the happiest of moments for the Finkelstein family. A grandmother, a mother, and four daughters—one of them my mother, Sala—were preparing a special meal on their kitchen's coal-fired stove. Beds that had been scattered across the wooden floor were stacked in a corner so guests could be accommodated. Clothes, washed earlier at the nearby stream, were drying in a warm, gentle breeze. Even the outhouse had been cleaned!

Esther Finkelstein had delivered a boy, and on the eighth day of his life, he was ritually welcomed into the Jewish community in Zwoleń, a small town in central Poland. His name, revealed the rabbi, was Avraham Meier. Shouts of "Mazel tov!" "Congratulations!" and "L'chaim!" "To life!" filled the room. The year was 1933.

My mother was five years old at the time, and little Avraham Meier became the center of her small universe. She helped her new baby brother with his baths and feedings. He was her plaything. As Avraham Meier began to walk and talk, she was always nearby.

"As the youngest and the only boy, he was the apple of our eyes," my mother told me. "He was so bright and inquisitive!"

While 1933 was a good year for the Finkelsteins, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party were busy turning neighboring Germany into a dictatorship, expanding their territorial ambitions, and building a new, Aryan order that had no place for Jews. After six years of slowly increasing torments for the Jews of Germany, the Nazis entered Czechoslovakia and then Austria, enacting their anti-Jewish decrees as they went. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, the German air force bombed Zwoleń, burning my mother's house to the ground and strafing women and children with machine gun fire as they ran for cover in the nearby woods. My mother and her oldest sister, Manya, pulled their grandmother into the forest with them.

"She kept crying to us, 'Go ahead, leave me and save yourselves,'" my mother recalled. "Of course, we couldn't . . . we loved her too much."

My mother had just turned 11 years old. Her little brother, Avraham Meier, was now six.

What to do? German soldiers were rounding up Jewish men and boys. My mother remembers her father planning to go into hiding with her little Avraham Meier.

"When will I see them again?" she tearfully asked her mother, who had no answer. How could she know?

As conditions for the Jews worsened, my mother was forced to dig ditches, wash floors, and pick potatoes in the service of the Nazis, day after day, week after week, month after month. Then, in the early fall of 1941, everything changed again. The remaining Jews of Zwoleń were rounded up and forced to march some nine miles to a railroad siding, where thousands of other Jews from the surrounding area had been brought. The Nazis walked among the frightened Jews and pulled 17 girls out of the crowd. My mother, who had just turned 13, was one of them. This would be the last time she saw her mother or anyone else from her town other than the young women who had been selected with her.

She was herded directly to a potato farm near a slave labor camp and later pulled out from another lineup and sent to make ammunition at the Skarzysko–Kamienna concentration camp. During those years, my mother suffered beatings, was nearly ripped apart by a German shepherd, lost her hair, was horsewhipped, and contracted a serious disease. On the day of her liberation—January 15, 1945—she weighed 60 pounds. She was 16½ years old.

What kept her going?

The hope, the dream, of finding her father and, in particular, her beloved little brother, Avraham Meier.

"They needed me; I needed to take care of them," she told me. "Surviving so I could find and care for them,

especially my baby brother: This was the priority in my thoughts."

My mother never did find her father or her little brother.

Arriving alone as a refugee in New York in 1949, then 21 years old, with only the clothes on her back, she took a train to New Haven, Connecticut, where her oldest sister, now married with an infant daughter, had been resettled. My mother, now called Sally, soon met the man who would become her husband, Morton Horwitz, and married him in 1950.

• • •

It was the happiest of moments for the Horwitz family. Sally Horwitz had given birth to a baby boy, and the family readied the house for the *brit* and the guests who would gather to celebrate. On the eighth day of my life, I was ritually welcomed into the Jewish community. My English name was Arthur Myron, and my Hebrew name, revealed to those in attendance, was Avraham Meier. Shouts of "Mazel tov!" "Congratulations!" and "L'chaim!" "To life!" filled the room. The year was 1954.

There are plenty of photo albums and home movies chronicling my childhood, while there were none—absolutely none—of my mother's family or of her little brother. Yet my mother carried with her a small, worn black-and-white photo. It was of a little boy about six or seven years old with his arms thrust upward in surrender. This, she insisted, was a photo of her little brother, Avraham Meier. But it wasn't.

Frayed and faded in her wallet,
massaged by the caress of fumbling fingers,
wrinkled like the familiar folds
of her grandmother's face —
"This is a photo of Avraham Meier. This is who you are named for."
But it wasn't.

It showed a little boy, alright,
maybe six or seven years old, arms thrust upward,
rosy cheeks, radiant smile, twinkling eyes? Perhaps once, but not now.
"This is a photo of Avraham Meier. This is who you are named for."
But it wasn't.

Hopes and dreams
reality and fantasy irrevocably intertwined.
"Please join me.
Hear the crackle of the electrified fence.
Glimpse sordid scenes of inhumanity through an otherwise enveloping fog.
See that girl over there? Gaunt? Beaten? Bald? Starving?
It's not me," she says.
But it was.

Hopes and dreams
reality and fantasy irrevocably intertwined.

Jettison the burden. Relieve the responsibility. Give up the guilt.
I just want to be me, yet I must live for two.
"This is a photo of Avraham Meier. This is who you are named for."
Indeed, it is.

We all have hopes and dreams. Some may never be achievable. As a young woman, my mother drew on the power of her hopes and dreams to soften the hard edge of her reality, to have a reason to go on, to get up every morning, to do what she was ordered to do, because her little brother needed her to live.

Avraham Meier didn't survive. When my mother and my father named me in his memory, her hopes and dreams were transferred. I now carry that legacy—but the photo of Avraham Meier that I carry is me.

Toba Abramczyk

Look to the Sky

When I was a small child, my dad used to take me over to the window and ask me to look to the sky. He would take my brother and sister and ask them to do the same thing. This happened all the time—whether it was a barbecue or a family occasion, he would take us out and say "Look to the sky."

When I got married, he took me outside. It was the hottest day of the year, but he wanted me to go out and look to the sky.

When I had my first child, he said, "I am not good with babies. Don't let me hold her, my hands can't carry her." His hands were bent and swollen from hard labor and from butchering meat for years and years. The day she was born, there were some 10 family members in the recovery room with me, all waiting for a turn to hold my daughter. All I could see was her little body bobbing up and down from person to person. There was much noise and laughter, but through all this hoopla, I saw my father, who had changed his mind and was holding his first grandchild, tears streaming down his cheeks. He was singing softly to her. I had never heard my father sing; perhaps this was a lullaby his mother sang to him. He walked her to the window and said, "Look to the sky."

I got it, I finally got it. I started to cry. I was sobbing so hard that everyone around me thought I was breaking down, but my mom understood. She took my hand and smiled. All these years—all the times we "looked to the sky," my father was showing our faces to his family, lost in the Shoah—his mother, father, sisters, brothers—and now he showed them his granddaughter, his legacy.

Gail Newman

The Bridge

Inside my mother's mouth,

a gap where she's removed the bridge,
the gums darker at the base.

The bridge, sunken to the bottom
of a water-filled glass, seems

out of place, like a fish plucked
from the sea plunked into a pail.

Looking in the mirror, my mother
opens wide, pulling coated floss down

between those teeth still intact.
I didn't know you had a bridge, I say,

and she looks at me slant-wise,
as if to say, *Don't ask,*

because the world is a dark throat,
and some words are best swallowed.

In Halbstadt my mother sat in a chair,
head back, a woman in a white coat

arched over her, pliers in hand,
the shining metal inside my mother's mouth,

wrenching left and right, the twisted teeth
loosening, my mother's arms tied down.

But I was lucky. Because she liked me,
she didn't pull the ones in front,

my mother says,
white teeth gleaming

behind a narrow smile.

Amos Neufeld

Who Dared

for my mother, Charlotte Iczkovics Neufeld

When I write about you, you stand beside me.
Impossibly, we're together again,
defying death, returning to a garden —
to Eden lost — where you were happy and free.

Surmounting fate, earth's fires, silenced places,
life's currents of loss, worlds taken, to touch home:
Jerusalem around us — not a dream.
On Carmel, a sea breeze kisses our faces.

We ride blue waves beyond the clear light of years
to Carmel's sun-filled shore where the sea still sings
of how you crossed storms of war on the wings
of a dove. Gave birth here — despite your fears.

Dared to live, love after a sea of losses.
Lived open-hearted through storms and silences.

Freida Harris

Would I Have Survived?

Would I, could I, have survived?

Would I have cost my mother her life?

These questions have flitted through my mind as far back as I can recall. I am certain that they are not thoughts common to the average American child. I, however, am the child of survivors.

I was provided with as normal a life as was possible for my parents to give me, but the Holocaust is always at the edges, the very borders of every aspect of my life. It is like wearing glasses with frames. You can look straight through the glass and see a beautiful, bountiful world. But look up, down, or side to side, and the borders close you in.

Would I have survived? And at what cost? I stand in awe of my parents. Even though I often get annoyed by the repetition of their stories, I wonder, What would I have done?

Would I have been brave enough to remove the yellow star, as my mother did, and dress as a hospital aide to enter a forbidden detention area to search for a beloved niece?

Would I have been clever enough to take a pail found in the trash to the concentration camp, as my mother had the foresight to do? She dragged the pail with her and used it as a toilet in the cattle car. Would I have been compassionate enough, as my mother was, to stand beside a young girl sick with dysentery, holding her when no one else would as she used the precious pail? Would I have had the ingenuity, afterwards, in the camp, to use the pail as a basin to wash my hair and clothes, or the generosity my mother showed as she lent that vital possession to all in need?

Would I have dared to tell a German soldier, as my mother did, to throw the extra suitcases onto the cattle car because I did not have the strength in my arms to lift them? Would I have filled them, as my mother did, with extra clothes to take on a journey that everyone knew, in August of 1944, was a one-way ticket to death? She used these extra goods, and others she picked up along the way, to exchange for food and medicine in the camps. Would I have been so resourceful?

And would I have been brave enough to say, No! I will go no further! as my mother did when the war was drawing to an end and the Russians could be heard at the gates of the camps? The Nazi commander had rounded up the remnants of his Jews and informed them that they must retreat with him in an orderly fashion. Those who refused to go would be shot, he warned; the barracks would be dynamited. Could I have taken the lead, as my mother did, and gathered my friends about me and hidden in the latrine? Could I have convinced them, as she did, that God and the Russians would save them, or, if not, that it was better to die now, because the march would surely kill them later?

What would I have done? And why do I have to be plagued with such questions? I grew up in America, the land of plenty. I have always been handed everything on the proverbial silver platter. My life has never been in danger. The only cleverness or bravery ever required of me is too insignificant to mention. Does this make me a lesser person than my mother? A happier person? Must I constantly compare myself to her?

These are not the ordinary questions of ordinary American life. But for me they are inescapable questions, given my background and the set of glasses that I wear, the glasses with the ineffable frames.

Menachem Z. Rosensaft

Sosnowiec Visited

light cuts the rain grey
semi-darkness
through curtains
sixty years old

from across the street
that should have been
but never will be
mine
I see shadows move
behind windows where
another family once lived
same rooms
same walls
same bricks
perhaps even the same furniture

here the good church-going citizens
watched and waited
until the non-believers
the non-Poles
were finally taken away,
then they stole
my mother's home
her bed
her clothes
my brother's toys

dead Jew reborn
to refuse to knock on their door
any door
I came to curse
only to find
them cursed already

my final victory: I can leave

even the air tastes bitter

Leah Kohn

I Don't Forget You, Imre

Lined up, leaning,
broken and frail, feet aching,
infected from shoes that didn't fit, or
from no shoes at all,
beaten and herded, the prisoners shivered, waiting.

The SS officer raged, screaming,
"We'll get every last one of you.
Every single one of you will die."

Then —
loud droning noises coming close.
American planes overhead, shooting.
Men ran for cover, frenzied.
My father grabbed his best friend, Imre.
Under a nearby bridge they held onto each other
as bullets came shooting down.

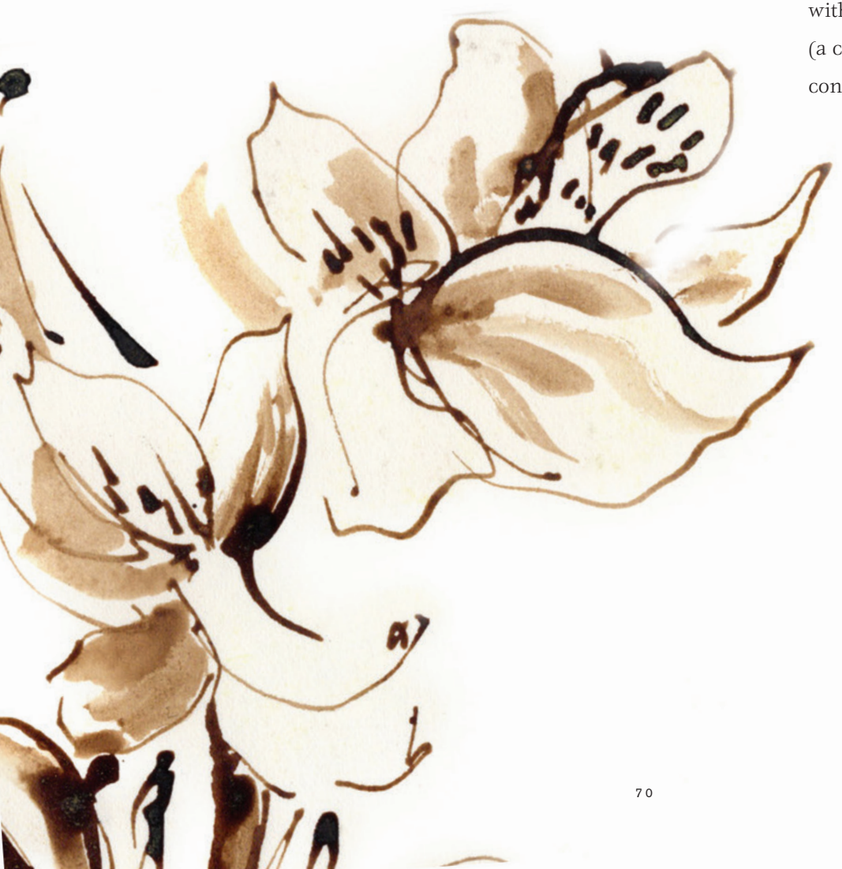
Imre!
Who was your father?
Who was your mother?
I don't even know.
But you were my father's friend.
He begged you to run with him —
"Imre, come, we're not safe here,
We have to run — "
while the bullets pummeled you from the sky.
You thought you were safe under the bridge —
"The bridge is thick," you insisted —
and chose to stay
but my father did not agree
and ran, fiercely, for his life.

He told us all about you,
how you became close friends in the death camp
in the same bunk, Block 13.
My father, #37014; you, #37016.
You were loyal and looked out for one another
all the years in Auschwitz.
My father's eyes filled with tears as he remembered,
though he rarely cried.

When the fighter planes had gone,
the skies were quiet.
He came back to find you
under the bridge,
riddled with bullet holes, bloody, struggling.
My father fell over you, crying.
"Imre, why didn't you come? I begged you,
I told you . . . "
You strained to speak
and died in my father's arms,
and his tears spilled over you.

Three years of Auschwitz,
and you almost made it. You would have made it,
but for those American fighter jets
whose pilots did not see your striped pajamas.

I don't forget you, Imre.
You were my father's friend.



Mike Frenkel

Rust

One could hardly suspect
that this man
now buttering toast
once drove his motorcycle
through Nazi terrain
from a meeting
of the French resistance fighters
with a birthday present
(a cold-forged iron Jewish star)
concealed in his knapsack.

One could hardly suspect
that this man
now shoving plates into
a dishwasher
once published poems
in underground magazines
and passed out
socialist leaflets
on the *Boulevard St. Michel.*

One could hardly suspect
that the woman
now jabbing him with words
on her way to the beauty parlor
still wears that iron star
sprinkled with rust.

Elimelech Gottlieb

On Studying the Shoah

The more I read, the more I was silenced.
The more I learned, the less I understood.
I read of so much silence.

"The Lithuanians used rollers to press the earth down" . . . *the earth was silent*.
"Away from the terribly blue skies" . . . *the skies were silent*.
"What had been the Jewish Quarter" . . . *had now fallen silent*.
She has so many questions she "dare not ask" . . . *silence*.
"He finally understood" . . . What did he understand? We don't know . . . *he is silent*.

"The school takes the children on trips into the camp
and tells them what happened there" . . . *but I am silent*.
The camp is now a museum.
They stood, oh, so meekly . . . *so silently*.
So many kinds of silence.

Munch's painting is called "The Scream."
The painting is not silent.

There is a silence that comes from dazed confusion.
There is silence that comes when questions die in our throats.
There is silence when anger chokes the words.
There is the silence of the anguished heart.
There is silence because we fear, if we give voice to our words,
we may not go on.
"And Aaron was silent." There is the silence of faith.

About the Contributors

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Nancy Patz has written and illustrated 13 popular picture books. *Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat?* (2003, Dutton) won the Sydney Taylor Award, among other prizes. Her portraits for18 Stones (2011, Jewish Museum of Maryland) were premiered in her 2010 solo exhibit at The Jewish Museum of Maryland and shown at Holocaust Museum Houston, where she lectured for 12 years. After Patz's drawings of artifacts appeared on the cover of the spring 2014 issue of *PRISM,* they were exhibited at Goucher College, at Temple Oheb Shalom in Baltimore, Maryland, and at the Anne Frank Center in New York. She lectures widely in schools and teachers' groups on the art of the picture book. Patz's most recent book is *Life on the Page: A Graphic Memoir* (2019, Barton Books).

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Esther Feinberg is the daughter of two survivors. Her parents, from different countries in Europe, met on the ship crossing the Atlantic, immigrating to America. Esther was born in New York, grew up in Florida, and now lives in San Antonio, Texas, where she works as a licensed insurance agent.

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Mike Frenkel, born in Paris, lives today in New York City. His writings have appeared in various publications, including *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust*; *Beyond Lament: Poets of the World Bearing Witness to the Holocaust*; the satirical journal *Defenestration*; and the *HuffPost*. His healthy mother, a Holocaust survivor from Romania, celebrated her 101st birthday with family in June 2021.

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Alan Kaufman's books include the novels *Matches* and *The Berlin Woman* and the memoirs *Jew Boy* and *Drunken Angel*. The son of a French-Jewish survivor, he is the editor of five anthologies, including *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*, *The Outlaw Bible of American Literature,* and *The Outlaw Bible of American Art*. His books have been published in the UK, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Kaufman has written for numerous publications, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle, HuffPost, Salon, Evergreen Review, Partisan Review*, and *The Jerusalem Post*.

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Leah Kohn was born in Zurich, Switzerland, the daughter of two survivors. She emigrated with her family to the US as a young girl and was raised in Detroit, Michigan. An avid writer and reader, she is also the owner and president of Quality Kosher Catering in Southfield, Michigan.

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Amos Neufeld, an attorney, film critic, and journalist, was born in Israel to survivors of the Shoah. His poems and film reviews have appeared in literary journals, newspapers, and anthologies including *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust*; *Voices of the Holocaust*; *New Traditions*; *PRISM*; and *Celluloid Power*, a film anthology.

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Gail Newman was born in a Displaced Persons' Camp in Lansberg, Germany. Her poetry has appeared in publications including *Prairie Schooner*, *The Atlanta Review*, and *Ghosts of the Holocaust. Blood Memory,* her new collection, chosen by Marge Piercy for the Marsh Hawk Press poetry prize, was awarded the Northern California Publishers and Authors Gold award for poetry. She teaches genocide and Holocaust studies through poetry and survivor testimony.

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Marge Piercy has authored 20 poetry collections, most recently *On the Way Out, Turn Off the Light* (2020, Knopf); 17 novels, including *Vida* (1984, Penguin Books); *Sex Wars* (2006), from Harper Perennial, which published her memoir, *Sleeping With Cats* (2002); and *Dance the Eagle to Sleep* (2011); the short story collection *The Cost of Lunch, Etc.* (2014); and a collection of essays and poems, *My Life, My Body* (2015), all from PM Press. She has read at over 500 venues in the US and abroad.

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Elizabeth Rosner is a bestselling novelist, poet, and essayist. Her first book of non-fiction, *Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory*, was featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* and in *The New York Times*; it was a finalist for a National Jewish Book Award. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies. "My Father's Souvenirs," "Chocolate," and "Anything" are from her full–length collection, *Gravity* (2014, Atelier26 Books).

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Gregg Shapiro, an entertainment journalist, is the author of eight books, including the forthcoming poetry collection *Fear of Muses* (2022, Souvenir Spoon Books). Recent and forthcoming lit-mag and anthology publications include *Poetica Review, Moving Images: Poems Inspired by Film* (2021, Before Your Quiet Eyes Publishing), *This Is What America Looks Like* (2021, Washington Writers' Publishing House), and *Sweeter Voices Still: An LGBTQ Anthology From Middle America* (2021, Belt Publishing).

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HILARY THAM

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Hilary Tham, z"l, was the author of eight books of poetry, including *Men and Other Strange Myths* (1994, Three Continents Press) and *The Tao of Mrs. Wei* (2003, The Bunny and the Crocodile Press); and a memoir, *Lane With No Name: Memoirs and Poems of a Malaysian-Chinese Girlhood* (1997, Three Continents Press). Tham was editor in chief for the publisher Word Works and poetry editor for *Potomac Review*.

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From Volume 12 (Spring 2020):
"Look to the Sky" and "Family"

From Volume 11 (Spring 2019):
"Rust" and "The Burning Sun"

From Volume 9 (Spring 2017):
"Second Survivor" and "My Mother's Scars Became My Scars"

From Volume 8 (Spring 2016):
"Chocolate," "The Flavor of Freedom" (formerly titled "Hunger"), and "My Mother Doesn't Know Who Allen Ginsberg Is"

From Volume 3 (Spring 2011):
"Daughter of Survivors,"* "Tattoo," and "How She Learned"

From Volume 2 (Spring 2009):
"Sosnowiec Visited"

From Volume 1 (Fall 2008):
"My Father's Souvenirs"

"Ask a Question" and "Would I Have Survived?" are reprinted from *In the Aftermath of the Holocaust: Three Generations Speak* (edited by Karen Shawn, 1996, The Moriah School), with permission from the authors.

"Namesake," "Secrets," and "I Don't Forget You, Imre" were written in Karen Shawn's writing workshop for members of the Second Generation, sponsored by the Covenant Foundation and Michigan's Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus. We thank Dr. Anne Donato, education specialist at the center, and Ruth Bergman, the center's director of education, for their efforts in laying the groundwork that prepared these talented writers for our subsequent work together.

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"Night Terror," "Hunger," and "The Bridge" are reprinted with permission from *Blood Memory* by Gail Newman (2020, Marsh Hawk Press).

"Anything" was originally published in *Gravity* (2014, Atelier26 Books) and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

"On Studying the Shoah" was written in the inaugural Holocaust education master's degree course at Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and is printed here with permission.

"The Second Generation," "A Refusal to Forgive the Death," and "Sosnowiec Visited" are reprinted from *Poems Born in Bergen-Belsen* (2021, Kelsay Books) with permission of the author. "The Second Generation" was originally published in *Midstream*, Vol. xxvi, No. 8 (October 1980). "Sosnowiec Visited" was originally published in *Rayonot: A Journal of Ideas* (2006, Park Avenue Synagogue).

We thank Amos Neufeld, whose poem "What Would Heal You" (p. 39) contains the line that we chose for the title of this special issue. "Who Dared" was originally published in *Shirim* in its 2018/2019 double issue, "*No More Mozart" & Other Poems on the Holocaust* (Charles Adès Fishman, guest editor).

We thank the graphic designer Gail Goldner Green for the skill, patience, grace, and generosity she brought to this project. Gail and our artist, Nancy Patz, have worked together on two of Nancy's previous books. Here Gail was the crucial link between Nancy's original art on paper and the penultimate printed version. Her artistic judgments and taste were important to us and helped to shape the look of the pages. We are indebted to this talented and dedicated friend. The results would not have been the same without her.

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Once again, as in so many prior issues of *PRISM*, our superb copy editor, David B. Greenberg, has ensured that the text is highly readable, error-free, and cogent. He responds promptly and with grace to all of our persistent inquiries, and his thoughtful, nuanced responses make working with him both a delight and an honor. He is our treasure, and we thank him.

Emily Scherer Steinberg is our gifted art director. She outdid herself with this issue, brilliantly adapting as necessary Nancy Patz's artwork and design to the exact specifications of the journal. Her excellent eye, flexibility, willingness to work collaboratively, and endless patience make her an invaluable colleague and dear friend.

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* *We were unable to update previously given permission for this poem despite our attempts to do so.*

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This unique and beautiful collection provides exceptional insight into the breadth of experiences of the Second Generation. These texts deepen our understanding of the Holocaust and of its impact on the generation that followed. The accompanying reflective artwork encourages students to read and re-read the texts, whose power and honesty demonstrate the importance of the Second Generation voice.

– PAULA COWAN, Ph.D.
University of the West of Scotland

A must read for academics and educators in this field! This monumental collection of captivating poems and intimate essays, portraying a multitude of Second-Generation perspectives and experiences, serves as a fundamental educational resource that enhances our collective understanding of multigenerational post-Holocaust trauma. The symbiotic relationship between the literary expressions of the torchbearers and the intricately composed visuals results in a layered experience that transcends dry data and creates fruitful ground for discussion in diverse educational settings.

– KEREN GOLDFRAD, Ph.D.
Head of the Teaching Enhancement Center
Bar-Ilan University, Israel

By the end, the title seems almost ironic: the meticulously selected and stunningly illustrated pieces give voice to the pain of the Second Generation and in doing so offer a type of healing, as the shared experiences may serve as an antidote to the loneliness, sorrow, and heavy burden carried by these children of survivors.

– LAUREN GOLDSAMT
Cognitive Behavioral Associates, New York

A treasury of paintings, drawings, and literary works that plumb the depths of understanding of the intergenerational effects of the Holocaust. The poignant poetry and heartfelt reflective responses of the children of survivors demonstrate how the Shoah continues to reverberate across time and geographical boundaries. This edition of *PRISM* will challenge preconceived notions that the Holocaust ended at liberation, just as it will inspire readers with stories of resiliency and hope.

– CARSON PHILLIPS, Ph.D.
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