



Treblinka

By Dr. Sylvia Flescher ('70 }

no matter
how many times
i hear the story
read the killing details
imagine the corpses
piled willy nilly
the stench
of decaying flesh
mixing in the air with
ashes floating
from the crematoria
again and again and again
truly i cannot comprehend

and yesterday when
we walked along the peaceful
Polish forest
amid bird-song and purple lupines
i could be forgiven
for forgetting
that we walked over
mass graves
where my people lay
beneath our feet
doctors and cooks
barbers and bakers
jewelers and plumbers
teachers and rabbis
lawyers and nurses
mothers and wives
and oh! the children

i stood stunned and quiet
amid the field of jagged stones
each a village, a town, a city
pointing sharply up to indifferent heaven
eternal
impermeable
unlike the vanished
abject Jewish flesh
melting burning smoking
in that man-made inferno

and back at our hotel
as i tried to clean my dusty
sandals and saw
the damp cloth turn
inky black
then i knew for certain
those ashes
staining my toes
were holy

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