

Auschwitz Remembered

Nikki van der Zyl

Nikki van der Zyl with her father, Rabbi Dr. Werner van der Zyl and mother escaped from Berlin in 1939. Her grandmother died at Auschwitz and she also lost her uncle and other members of the family.

When all around them died, those few survived.
Their skeletal bones were then revived;
Auschwitz memories that they carried, lived with,
(Which denialists say are just a Jewish myth),
Have shadowed, burdened them their whole life long,
To live when others died, they felt was wrong.
They wondered why they lived, why them, what for?
Their loved ones gone; for them an open door.
They married, they had children, all of that,
But two dimensional. Zombie – like and flat
Has for the most part been their daily lot.
These are the ones the world so soon forgot.
Unable to express their deepest fears,
Their blackest memories kept inside for years.
They wrapped them round themselves with steel;
Are only now revealing how they feel.

For fifty years they waited to unload
This horror that was waiting to explode.
Let no one say 'It never was so bad',
Or, 'It was just like so-and-so, how sad.'
Six million Jews were killed, was it just fate
That prejudice turned into monstrous hate?
Let's learn from this; we know Man can be cruel,
But doesn't he need help his craze to fuel?

© Niiki van der Zyl