

Rachel Goldstein

The War

*You can't start a story about the war
with 'It was a sunny day'.
my mother, Hala Goldstein*

It was a sunny day and my grandfather
followed his wife and the four children,
followed his feet, following their feet,
with miles of wind in their bones.
My whole naked family. No word yet
from God.

If I place before him a bowl of porridge,
will he eat? If I wash his face,
would his eyes be stripped of fire?
Let the trains be angels and tracks
ladders of smoke. Let heaven fill
the chamber's longing. Let my poem
sing for all that cannot be redeemed.

Rachel Goldstein is the daughter of two Holocaust survivors. She was born in a German Displaced Person's Camp in 1946. She is a poet and artist in the Boston area, where she has been studying in Barbara Helfgott-Hyett's Workshop for Publishing Poets for the past ten years. Her poems have appeared in the following publications: *Lilith Magazine*, *The Antigoniish Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Parting Gifts*, *The Red Kimono*, *Poetica Magazine* and various anthologies of Holocaust Poetry. In 2007 her poems were included in the Northwest Cultural Council's "The Look of Love" Exhibition. The Robert Penn Warren Second Prize for Poetry, 2002, was awarded to her for the poem, *House of Mercy*. A chapbook of her work, *Except For That*, is being published this spring.