

Tears

—by Shonne N. Farrell

*I watched as my children were led away,
with yellow six point stars upon their breast,
into cattle cars,
like sheep—
Carried away to be slaughtered.*

I saw their tears fall like rain.

*My children's bodies
became feeble and thin,
then the cruel soldiers shoved,
my cherished ones into deadly showers.*

I felt their tears of agony.

*The cries of my chosen,
called out to me as the soldiers
stood them in rows,
along deep trenches.*

*I saw the men, women, and children
bow before their oppressors in resignation.
Then I heard shots crack the spring dawn,
and silence choked the bird's song.*

I saw their tears mingle with their blood.

*I could smell the foul odor,
of the furnace that burned day and night,
trying to remove my children from memory.
Their ashes rose in thick billowing clouds,
which drifted like a black curtain across the sky.*

I felt their tears of anger.

*My children have not forgotten those days,
filled with black despair and death.
I hear them tell their children,
remember the pain of those hours.
They now walk tall, proud, and strong,
my chosen, my love ones.*

I rejoice in their tears of joy.

1984 I was in Honolulu with my husband and four children. I returned to college after a long break for marriage and having children. I was in a class for poetry writing, something I enjoyed as a girl. Most of the pieces I wrote were mediocre, just something to get down on paper for the class. I felt like I had dried up during those long years between my school days and the college course I so anticipated taking.

One Sunday evening, after attending a multi-denominational service at the Pearl Harbor Chapel, the poem "Tears" quite literally overpowered me. To this day, I do not take the credit for authoring this piece. I really feel it was a gift from a Higher Power. The poem would not let me rest until I wrote it down. When I submitted it to my professor, she asked how I came to write this poem. I could only say, it came and I had to write it. She helped me submit the poem to a local Jewish newspaper. The paper published it and sent a copy to the Holocaust Museum in Israel.

I had to take another break from my schooling when my husband retired from the service and we were sent to the mainland. I eventually went back to school in Maryland. Part of my course requirements was "Western Civilization." My professor required we read "Night" by Elie Weisel, a holocaust survivor. I had never read any of the history of the holocaust up until this time. Although I had some vague ideas of what occurred, I never read any of the survivor accounts. When I read "Night" I was shocked by how Weisel's description and my poem were so alike. All I could do was cry.

Someone once said "If you don't learn from history, you are doomed to repeat it." We see and hear of holocaust all over our planet. We know that many people are murdered every day because of their differences, whether it is religion, color of skin, education, feuds, and nationalities, just to name a few false reasons for genocide. The attitude of "we against them" has caused so much blood-shed and pain. Until we can see each other as members of our family, realizing we are brothers and sisters, not Albanians, Americans, Islamic, Catholic, Black, White, Red or Yellow. To find true Peace, we have to learn from the past, and learn to love.