

In The Place Between - Part 2

by Sheila Luecht

This is another part of the dream. There is more and it will follow.

A day came that I noticed a fence and wondered if it was something that would keep me in. I began to experiment with the thought that perhaps it was there, but did not mean anything to me. It was not what we were all concerned with, we just played, who cared about the buildings and fences? They did not mean anything to us. When all the other people were gone; the soldiers and everyone gone, our surroundings became much clearer. It was clearer, to all of us, in fact. We realized that we were alone with each other and that we could hear and sometimes even laugh, or talk. We could understand each other even though the languages were different because we could still see in our minds what we were trying to say out loud. This caused some uproarious laughter sometimes and it seems that it was so loud; we could make a bird jump. You know one that was always there. Not the ones that visited.

There were not too many pets visiting or animals that were fleetingly here anymore. No, these animals were here all the time, the cows in the fields and the deer seemed to be multiplying.

One day a girl with blond hair was walking along the fence on the other side. There were just a handful of us left and I was the only one to notice her. I watched her. She did not see me. The next time I saw her, I went to the fence. I thought she might yet be one of us, someone new. There used to be so many new people. But she did not seem to see me.

I waited and then again she came by the fence. It was funny because she dressed in different clothes and all we had were the ones, that, well, the ones we arrived in. They never got dirty and we never out grew them. I knew why, deep inside I did know why.

This girl was never going to see me. She was alive and I was dead. Suddenly for the first time, I was sad. The gulf of separation was mighty and I was lonesome. So many of my friends were gone. Were they my friends? Or were they just like me, dead and somehow they had left this place. Who decided when you got to leave, who said you, you go here. Surely it would not be that soldier who told her which line to stand in? No, it could not be him. He was frightening and screamed and hit people with his whip. No, who ever was deciding, it was not he.

I realized over time that I had been here for longer than a few days. I knew because I could see this girl, who could not see me, grow. Now she was this tall, and wearing these shoes, now this hair was in braids, now it was short, now it grew back. I don't know how long I was there. Soon I realized I was also alone. Everyone had moved on. No more kids to play with.

Her name was Magda Jablonski. She dropped her books one day. A piece of paper, some homework, blew away and for a moment as we both watched it our eyes seemed to meet. Was she the decider and I just missed her choosing everyone else? Could we really see each other or did she just happen to look where I happened to look. I am not sure. Really not sure what happened that day, but now I did know her name. That was not all, something very significant happened. I learned the date.

* * *

birch

Neil Welliver's Birch Trees

This work is currently in a private collection.

I once had a print of this picture. I no longer have it. It is burned in my memory for a number of reasons. Some unpleasant. You cannot separate me however from the trees in it. Mr. Welliver used to paint some rather large canvases. The thing is people said you could walk right into them, they were so real looking. When he died in 2005 he donated 700 acres of his land in Maine that he used to paint to the public. Now you walk the land that inspired him. I used to spend a lot of time alone in the woods, appreciating the solitude of nature and sometimes photographing it. Now my son does that.

Birkenau means Birch Tree Meadow.

