

In The Place Between

by Sheila Luecht

I awoke in a field filled with flowers and grass. This was odd at first because it felt like summer and I knew it had been winter when I arrived. In the field there were many children like myself. We played endless games of fussball and tag. We never got hungry and just smiled and laughed. We noticed each other and once in a while some new children would join us. It was complete freedom. We did not have to go in for supper, we did not have to go to school, and we did not have to be in for Shabbat dinner even. We just did our own thing. No one bothered us. We never grew tired of this freedom, this wonderful playing. We did not really speak but could know things by just looking at each other. We did not think of dark things, there was only the grass, the flowers, the scent of the hay and the little bugs and creatures around us. Sometimes we would see a large deer or a bird, but not as often as you might think for all the time we were there. We just stayed together.

Expect for some things I remembered and missed, it was a blissful existence. We just played. Do you remember when you just played? The endless walks, the fun in the water, the sandcastles on the shore of that beach, that time. I would think of those things and bring all the kids with me there and they would do the same for me. We had an endless panorama of happy times to indulge in.

Some of us, and we knew who each other were, knew that this existence was different from what our lives were before the two lines. We remembered our parents, our homes, our pets, and our siblings. Sometimes, we would see them. Our pets, after a time would visit. There would be dogs, cats, horses and so many turtles and birds. They would come for a little while, we would pet them or hug them or sing to them silently and they would go along their way. Their leaving did not make us sad. It was just like a visit from

someone you loved and knew they had to go home for dinner or something.

The group of buildings next to us, where we once were, after a time seemed different. First it became more crowded and busy, we could see, just out of the corners of our eyes the daily activity, the smoke, and the suitcases. Funny thing, we could never really see them straight on. It was as if it was all happening somehow in the distance, around a corner, and we just caught the tip of it. I don't think we understood much about that. It was kind of a parallel place, right beside us, but not the same. It did not bother us, we were just aware of it, in a very small way.

We played and had joy. As the seasons changed in that peripheral world, we did not feel it. We only saw the snow a bit, only felt the wind a bit, we were not really in it. We still kept ourselves busy. There was something that I did begin to notice. I could hear better. The sounds from the camp were growing somehow silent. I could hear the birds more. Then I noticed that some of us were disappearing. It was not obvious at first, but in time I began to recognize what happened just before it seemed someone disappeared. This happened because over time there were fewer of us, so I could notice more. First I thought I saw some very bright light, like the sun touched the ground or something. The next thing I knew, the kid would look into the light, smile and be gone. Sometimes I heard them speak outloud, which I had not before. My ears strained always to hear more but mostly I did not. I heard one word, words like, "Mutti!!!" or "Vati" or languages I did not speak or understand but it seemed like they were saying MOM! DAD!

I felt happy when this happened and wondered if it would happen to me. I began to see more out of the corner of my eye. There were no more stripped pajama people. There were fewer children with me too. I guess I finally noticed it. The very little ones were long gone. The babies laying in the grass reaching for the butterflies were first

to go. Now that I remember that, they were always in one place and in time, they just were not there. Then it was the little kids who could crawl, then the ones who could walk. All these, the very youngest of us, had not been a part of this place for some time. I wondered why I just realized that. I guess I was too busy playing.
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Part of a larger fictional piece.

