

# Mama

*by* Tim Young

There were ten thousand photographs buried in the bottom of the jar  
The jar was large but did not look quite so big  
Mama kept everything she ever put her hands on  
There were items in the cellar that nobody would ever mention  
The cold of the winter and heat of the summer were also in the jar  
Mama sang Happy Birthday to all the neighborhood kids in Yiddish  
She ran a second hand shop where many of the photos originated  
The kids on the block did not know what to think of Mama  
Thousands of photographs boiled and burned one night while mama was away  
She never found out until she took a turn for the worse  
Her sons and daughters lived across the country and were unaware of her pain  
Mama never used the telephone  
Father had moved upstate with a twenty-one year old girl  
One night he felt Mama's pain float through his bedroom window  
He arrived in the city on the morning train  
The sun fell hard on his head and eyes  
It was difficult finding where Mama lived  
All he had to go on were some photos  
He had stolen these from Mama when he moved out of the house  
Father was not laughing about forgetting his old address  
He dropped several tears on the old photographs  
Mama was in bed holding tightly on to a large jar  
There were some dogs outside barking in the parking lot  
She never heard them

