

Maybe Next Time

264 Word Count

As I am walking with my granddaughter,
She innocently inquires about my past.
Where did I grow up? What did I do for fun?
How did I get to where I am today?

The answers to these questions should be simple.
But they're not.

I want to tell her of where I've been and what I've done,
But to tell her these things, I need to delve into memories
I've worked to suppress for many years.

The atrocities I've seen are not for little ears.
Is she mature enough to hear my stories?
As I sift through my head, remembering times from so long ago,
I try to choose which stories she can comprehend.

What about when the police came to my home?
Banging on our door in the night,
Taking us without a word of explanation,
Confused, scared, seemingly alone.

Or could I tell her of the train ride?
My whole town, packed into a single car.

The overwhelming smell of so many
And the feeling of being corralled like animals.

Could I tell her of the camp itself?

The paths you were forced to take –

One toward the gas chambers,

The other allowing you to live at least one more day.

No, I can't tell her any of these things.

I cannot watch as her eyes become as large as saucers.

I cannot answer the barrage of questions sure to follow.

I cannot expect her to carry the baggage of my past.

Instead of explaining how I came to survive,

I say to her, *Not now.*

You wouldn't understand.

Maybe next time.