

The Snow
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708 Words

Winter, 1944.

Snow and ashes fell from the sky, falling together in unholy unison.

The pure white of the earth had long given way to the other colors that collected there.

It was this way all over KZ Ravensbrück-

Flecks and smears and puddles and streaks tainted the radiant white snow.

The ground was a mottled tapestry colored with blood and sorrow and pain.

The white snow was a canvas painted with horror.

The snow was brown.

The mud kicked up by the trudging feet of the countless women trapped there.

The demanding labor that many of the women couldn't handle-

That made them simply lie down and die.

They toiled in workshops and factories making supplies and rockets-

Feeding the war machine that had eaten them alive.

Women doing what they were told, day after day-

Toiling like machines, with about the same sense of self-worth.

Groups of women pulling carts like oxen, being treated like livestock.

Brown mud covering the women, unable to be removed.

Brown sawdust from the workshops, filling their lungs.

Brown liquid served in bowls, staving off the death slowly creeping closer.

The labor and toil and the horribly brown mud consumed their days.

The snow was red.

The blood spilled by many women for many reasons over many, many days.

The first menstruation of young girls, afraid of what it meant-

Only to find that malnutrition quickly caused the bleeding to cease.

Women whipping their fellow inmates-

Simply because they were promised extra rations.

Horrible medical experiments- legs removed, chemicals injected-

Simply to simulate and learn from the injuries of soldiers on the frontlines.

The blood flowed forth from thousands of women, soaking deep into the earth.

Red blood pooling around a corpse that lays where she died.

Red phlegm coughed up by a young woman, once so full of promise.

Red wine on the table of the commandant, apathetic to the pain outside his door.

The pain and violence and shockingly red blood consumed their lives.

The snow was black.

The horrid stains of ash that fell nonstop from the sky.

The bodies of women who had fallen from exhaustion-

And the bodies of women shot for being unable to work.

The many women and girls gassed in boxes as constricting as their lives-

And packed into crates and shipped to the crematorium.

The fire was lit, and the bodies turned black-

And they fell as the snow did, covering the camp.

The women looked to the skies for divine inspiration and got eyefuls of soot.

Black corpses of those who once had names and loved ones.
Black souls keeping the guards warm through the cold German nights.
Black futures for the women, whose hope had almost run out.
The hopelessness and death and desperately black ash consumed their bodies.

The snow was slick with melt water and tears.

Tears given by women with nothing left to give-
Women tormented and destroyed by the walls that kept them in.
Women volunteering to work in brothels, to “boost morale” in nearby camps-
In return for special treatment they would never receive.
Women groped and exposed and humiliated-
Broken in spirit long before they were broken in body.
Women who had their possessions and dignity and clothing stripped away.
Puddles of urine in the bunkhouses filled to capacity.
Rivers of water and ash flowed through the streams around the camp.
Troughs of drinking water stood ready, along with a cholera outbreak.
The humiliation and spite and soul-crushing depression consumed their spirits.

The snow was melting away.

Spring had emerged- April had come-
Along with the news of Hitler’s demise.
The day of his death, the Russians filled the camp-
Their uniforms free of the fascist symbol that had destroyed the women’s lives.

They broke down the walls to deliver aid, saving many-

But unable to save many, many more.

The melting of the snow, and with it the horrors of an era.

The melting of the hearts of the hardened Russian soldiers moved to tears.

The melting of a hatred that had gripped a nation for far too long.

Nearly 100,000 women never got to leave the camp.

The horrible, horrible snow didn't last-

But their memories and stories and legacies live on.

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