

When Young People Listen

You come to our homes
You bring cameras and memory cards
Trepidation and open hearts
You bring youth.

We offer the past
The before, the during, the after
The life that could have been
The hiding, the horror, the hell
The escape, the luck, the new beginning.

To you, it is ancient history.
A world of carriages and newspapers, of radio, of grandparents, of cholent, of friends,
Of simplicity
A world that once was.

A world that once was
Turned ghettos and forced labor and running and squalor and frozen skin and hangings
and beatings and death and death and death and numbness

A world that once was
turned tanks and soldiers, open gates, and displaced people
a world of weddings, of loss, of never going home

A world that once was
turned ships and Lady Liberty and babies and studies and jobs and hope and discovering that we will
never see them again

You listen
We speak
You ask
We answer
You ask
We cry

You turn off the camera
You shake our hands
You thank us
You leave

We shake
We remember
The nightmares arrive again

You call
You check facts

You worry
You try
You understand and
You don't.

Weeks later,
We come.
With our families and friends
With curiosity and wonder
Not knowing what you have done with our stories.

You tell
We listen
We watch our own lives
Play out upon your face

We smile
We cry
We remember
We ache.
We ache
To remember

We think
You are the light where there once was none.
You are the light
Our past has a future.
You give
Our past a future.

written by Jennifer Rudick Zunikoff on 11.26.13 in honor of the Goucher College "Oral History of the Holocaust" students and the Survivors they interview