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A Granddaughter's Onus

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A Granddaughter's Onus

By: Deborah Katz

I stand as witness
for my grandparents life story
joy, pain, what keeps?
Germany, Poland,
Austria, and Germany
I'm American
what stories are told
to the next generation
which lessons are taught
such limited time
so many stories to pick
I'dor v'dor
Buchenwald the place
a father taken, stolen
heart broken, pain and disease
bat mitzvah party
apt descriptions: fun, loud, proud
my experience
Opa's day long ago
ended in shock and despair
the guests arrested
what is kept, preserved
the pain to fear or the strength

to emulate now
more than history
my Shoah lessons point out
genocide is now
father, grandfather
son, daughter, sister, brother
mother, grandmother
friend, neighbor, peer,
all lost through death, fear, choice
how was it rebuilt?
what can stand on a
foundation of ashes, tears
let's discover now
here, everywhere we
need to learn the past so that
a brighter future
is built over pain
not forgetting but learning
a new way forward