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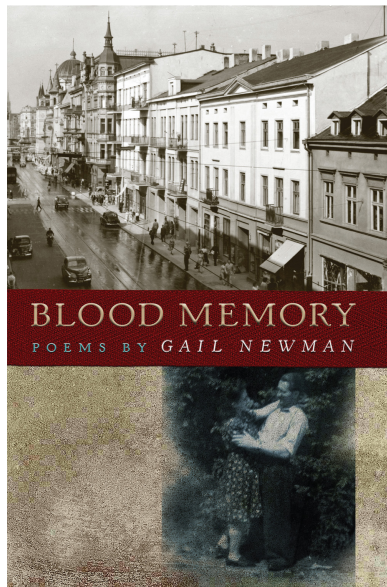
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**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz:  
Daughter of Holocaust Survivors  
Shares How Light Can Shine Through Even in The Darkest Times**

**San Francisco, March 30, 2020** - The Nazi Holocaust was more than a hate crime; it was an unspeakable horror unlike anything the world had ever seen before. Seventy-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, Gail Newman, daughter of survivors, has written ***BLOOD MEMORY***, (May 1, 2020), a book of poems that movingly shows how her parents and family members looked straight through the eye of evil, facing down death, disease, and despair. As we commemorate the end of World War II and the liberation of Auschwitz, Newman reminds us that even in the midst of the most unspeakable tragedy hope and resilience can survive.



*BLOOD MEMORY* traces the path of Holocaust survivors from Poland to America during and after World War II. The poems encompass the themes of memory, immigration, assimilation and the legacy and impact of genocide on the second generation. Newman gives us stories of resistance and humanity in an inhumane situation. *BLOOD MEMORY* is a eulogy to the dead and a tribute to the survivors.

In the poem, “My Mother Remembers,” Newman’s mother is sent to a forced labor camp where she and others sabotage war machinery, an act that could lead, if discovered, to immediate death:

*Piece by piece, bending our heads down to the work,  
we put the wrong part in the wrong hole,  
so the guns would not fire.*

Later in the poem, to keep their spirits alive, Newman’s mother tells the women stories from books she has read:

*Then we walked back through the town,  
the smell of bread and meat in the street.  
After we were locked in at night,*

*two hundred women and girls,  
the guard gone until morning, we were left  
together, sitting and talking like home.*

*I told stories from books I had read,*

.....

*I remembered the words,  
and told the stories  
until we forgot where we were*

.....

*until soldiers threw stones  
at the window, yelling, Come out.  
Come out. The war is over!*

### **About the Author**

Gail Newman was born in a Displaced Persons’ Camp in Lansberg, Germany. Raised in Los Angeles in a community of Holocaust survivors, she lives in the San Francisco Bay Area where she works as a poet-teacher for California Poets in the Schools. A former arts administrator and museum educator at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, she was the co-publisher and editor of *Room, a Women's Literary Journal*. She also edited *Inside Out*, a book of poetry lessons for teachers as well as two collections of children's poems, *C is for California* and *Dear Earth*. A collection of her poetry, *One World*, was published by Moon Tide Press. Her latest book, *BLOOD MEMORY*, was honored with a Marsh Hawk Press First Place Award and a publication contract.

### ***BLOOD MEMORY***

By Gail Newman

Paperback: 74 pages

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Language: English

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*“People can withstand the most horrific experiences and build meaningful and even joyful lives. We remember the Holocaust to honor the living and the dead. And we remember so that we will be vigilant and compassionate, so that we don’t stand idle when others, of any religion, culture or race, experience bigotry, hatred, or genocide.”*

Gail Newman

Gail Newman’s grandparents were murdered in the Nazi’s march through Europe during World War II. Her parents were sent to Auschwitz though they miraculously survived, her father by laying under a dead body and pretending to be dead himself.

This year marks both the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II and the liberation of the Auschwitz death camps. Gail’s new book, *BLOOD MEMORY*, is a poetic journey through her life with the weight of her parents’ history shadowing their lives. In spite of that, their family found hope and success in America, while living with dignity and courage.

*BLOOD MEMORY* shows us that while man’s inhumanity to man knows no bounds sometimes people’s kindness can appear even through the most horrendous situation. The need to help others was never broken even by the Nazi’s most barbaric behavior.

Even though the following small gesture could have resulted in immediate death, it gave back a little of the humanity that had been systematically stripped away by the Nazis.

*...In the camp, my mother and Malka kept close.  
They shared crumbs, stood together  
at roll call. When the kapo slapped my mother  
and her glasses fell to the ground,*

*Malka picked them up  
out of the dust, settled them back  
over my mother’s eyes.*

*From “Cousins in Auschwitz”*

It is important to remember the past, no matter how terrible, so that it won’t be repeated ever again. “Blood Memory” refers to memories that are carried from one generation to the next through the heart, mind, and body. Blood is the war, ancestry, and cultural heritage.

Hailed as a testament to humanity, Gail’s book pays tribute to and explores the meaning of “Blood Memory”. Especially in this time, when hate crimes are on the rise, Newman shows us that through darkness, the light of the living always shines through.

## **Praise for *Blood Memory***

*There isn't a weak poem in the book. Writing about the Holocaust can be difficult now, not that it was ever easy. It has become myth or something people use as a metaphor for something they object to: those who know, who went through it, are dying off. Those who deny what happened multiply. To make fresh powerful poems rooted in Shoah is amazing. She does it by specifics. There are no faceless men in dirty ragged striped uniforms. The people are individualized.*

Marge Piercy, Award Winning Poet and Novelist

*The very unspeakability of the Holocaust can make writing about it fraught. Gail Newman, the child of Holocaust survivors, transcends this difficulty in her vital new collection, *Blood Memory*, by telling her parents' stories—the story of millions—in tender, particular detail... This is a book about collective memory, about the importance of story. ...Newman...doesn't flinch from brutality, yet she has achieved something extraordinary. *Blood Memory* is a testament to humanity. Despite the darkness, the light of the living shines through.*

Ellen Bass, Poet and Chancellor of Academy of American Poets

*Blood Memory's ...sparse language (is) at times reminiscent of Charles Reznikoff's chronicles of what befell the Jews of Europe in the Nazi era... "Come with your language and candlesticks" (Newman) says challenging that terrible history with implicit hope and confidence in her craft and imagination "Come as a testament," she insists, seeking to transform the unbearable, "with the honey of praise and prayer in your mouth.*

Michael Heller, Poet and Essayist

*These poems salute high-risk comradeship, war production sabotage, and extraordinary life-saving resilience in ghettos, camps, and post-liberation years. Throughout, love mixes with lunacy, tenderness with torment, optimism with despair, and solace with savagery. All of us—Jewish and Gentile alike—are in the poets' debt as her art propels us forward. Would that our future never again gives cause for such a moving and unforgettable commemoration.*

Arthur. B. Shostak, Author of *Stealth Altruism, Forbidden Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust*