

My Enemy, My Friend
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German soldiers turned stalagmites, legs frozen stiff
Rigid from waiting on the Russian front, like dominoes, begging to be knocked over
You were to carry those icicle soldiers down from the train, down the stairs
You were their pack mule, giving Nazi snowmen piggyback rides
Those men were cinder blocks on your body
Your rib-showing body, your fragile-as-a-house-of-cards body
Your months and months in the Kraków Ghetto body
And the soldiers were the ones needing immediate care?

The one you carried, the young SS man, the blonde-haired blue-eyed ice cube
He had said the most terrible thing to you, how clearly do you remember it?
How he didn't spout slurs or ooze disgust, how he had no hostility
No, the most terrible thing he did that day was call you his friend

He looked at you, a slave to his people, and called you a friend
He was fighting a war for the right to exterminate your race and he called you a friend
Your blood boiled so sweltering, your skin began to burn
He suffered when you made his frozen legs hit the stairs, every single step down
Did he then realize that he could see true suffering if he had looked at the man who carried him?

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But that's not why you tell this story, is it?
You don't want us to harm those who've treated us with hatred
No, you want us to know how you sobbed after you put him down
How you regretted every time he screamed in pain--because of you
You had realized that if you hurt your enemy, you became just like him
Is that why you tell your story?

And today we ask that question, the same one that you've been asked a million times
How did you learn to love your neighbor, Mr Offen, when he wrung you out and left you to die?
Well, many years ago, you answered like this:
"Hate in itself is self-destruction, it ties a noose around your neck"
And if I want to take action, if I've truly learned from you
When faced with opposition, I will respond with poise and respect

Even though it may seem impossible, when so many are bound by their rage
I can accomplish more with an ounce of compassion than I can with an ocean of hate
Because if we continue to weaponize hatred and solve our conflicts with war
It's like setting the world on fire and expecting ourselves not to burn