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“A Lot of Light Where There was Darkness”

She held a candle up
In the blackness so thick that the children could not see the sky
Hitler held his hands up
And created the dark that killed hope, murdered love and ended innocent lives.
She was given a choice: face death or flee to Palestine
And she courageously remained in Hitler's grasp.
Her choice was not vain or thoughtless,
Her purpose was clear
She was the candle to guide the lives of the suffering children.
Her life as an artist had been a success,
But her greatest was to come
Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was sent to Terezin in 1942.
Armed with heart and paint supplies, Friedl entered.
She collected cardboard, paper and tissue for the children to draw on.
And in the hidden recesses of the ghetto,
Friedl taught the children to draw, to imagine, to create.
A world that had been so suddenly stripped away
Was found by the light of a candle.
For children who would never see another butterfly,
She taught how to paint one.
For children who lost their mothers,
She became one.
Friedl did not rescue others out of the jaws of death,
She chose to put herself there with them.
And, in the darkest hour of human history,
She took the hands of thousands of children and saved their souls.
They were her greatest masterpiece.
Through her story, she took my hand and whispered to me
The secret of happiness is seeing light where there is none.
This way I can choose to conquer the enemy of hate.

Bibliography

I Never Saw Another Butterfly. New York: Schocken Books, 1993.

An Evening of Holocaust Remembrance: The Children of Terezin. Orange: Chapman University, 2001

<http://www.sharat.co.il.lel.friedl.html>

¹Ela Weissburger said this of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. Weissburger was one of the children who were taught by Dicker-Brandeis in Terezin. Of the 1500 children who passed through Terezin, she was one of the 100 who survived.