

HIDEAWAY - POETRY BY JUDY GRUNFELD

1945-1947, age 8-10, while in hiding in Budapest, Hungary

The Prisoner

How I envy you, Bird
You are free
Free to fly.
Look at me!
See, I'm a motherless prisoner.
You live with your mother
And are free.
Bird on the branch,
How happy you must be!

In your world
There is no religion, nationality, or politics
No life-threatening cannon, pistol or gun.
You all praise the Lord with one voice
For all bird-thoughts are as one.

April 1945, age 8

Absence

I was far from my mother
So far
For so long.

I came to know the world
Came to learn independence
Came to see so many people
Beautiful and kind
Mean and cruel.

But now in my heart
I feel springing up
A lake of joy
Because I have found
My dear mother
Once more.

April 1946, age 9

The Heart

What is the heart?
An organ.
When it no longer beats
The cheeks pale
And life ceases to be.
What is the heart?
A pattern painted on paper
Or cut out.
But what is the real heart
The one which feels pain and joy?
A multi-colored fantasy-nothing.
And still it can hurt, even break.
No one can fathom its depths
Not even the most wise,
However great.
The heart remains
A sacred secret
Forever.

May 1947, age 10

Sorrow

Don't buzz, you fly!
Don't soar, you little bug!
Don't bloom, you beautiful flowers!
And you sun, don't shine!
Let no one be filled with joy
Let no cheek glow with delight.
Only pain in every room
No happiness anywhere at all.
My soul is consumed by pain
But who can share what I feel?
I know I am all alone.
Well then, buzz you fly!
Soar, you little bug!
Let all the flowers bloom!
It's easy to sorrow
But hard to forget.
Laugh, you world!
At whom?
Me.

December 1947, age 10