

MOTIVATION

Upon visiting the Holocaust Centre and watching the documentary “As Seen Through These Eyes”, I was most struck by the Romani people (also referred to as Gypsies) and the suffering they endured. (This being forcibly moved to concentration camps, forced sterilisation, extermination, inhumane medical and scientific experiments, etc.) What the Gypsies experienced was not only horrific, but a clear example of the evils that can easily be allowed to occur due to an absence of Human Rights. The fact that this appalling injustice was carried out shows how incredibly essential the protection and preservation of Human Rights is. By writing this poem, I hope to illustrate the depth of their (the Gypsies) suffering and through this, show how it has impacted and contributed to the mind-set of advocates for Human Rights today.

WE HAVE THE SKY IN OUR VEINS

They call us gypsies,
for the gypsy is free.
We have the sky in our veins.
We bask in the glow of the bright stars,
our skins full with vitality.
(full with song)
We dance barefoot
with the warm flickers of shadow.

They called us gypsies,
he calls us criminals.
(yet it was you who stole our ability to give life.)
he, their twisted messiah, their infernal shepherd,

(are you the fallen son?)

he stole us from our bright stars
to a place darker than the space between them.

They call us gypsies,
yet we no longer remember our bright stars.
Our skins, once full and fat,
now sunken and stretched taut over icy bones.
(Only Death dances with these cold shadows)

They call us gypsies,
yet our songs are empty.
The only music a sickening cacophony
of screeches and shouts.
(What have you done to our children, Dr Mengele?)
Some surrender to the lightning fence,
(We had the sky in our veins once)
rather than drown in the gasping horror
of a hundred little silenced screams.

They call us gypsies,
yet we're nothing more
than a horde of swaying skeletons.
With the wave of a hand,
our feeble bodies collapse in a heap,
shadowed, sunken eyes now forever still.
Then everything is only red, only fire,
only sweltering flickers.

They call us gypsies,
yet the sky is no longer in our veins.

We are the sky.

We frolic in the breeze,
our skins filled with light and breath,
cheeks flushed and eyes bright.

*(we dance barefoot on the tongues
of those who have not forgotten,
of those who roar for freedom for all.)*

We dance,
for we are finally free.