



The nights have been cold. The path to the chapel is very icy. My steps recently have not always been secure. So in the morning I use a stick to help me walk. The garden fountain is frozen. A robin sits on a nearby branch staring at the inaccessible water.

On Sunday many groups in the world will commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz —January 27, 1945. In this Nazi world of unbelievable bestiality, between 2 and 4 million people were murdered. Some younger friends think that I spend too much time thinking about those days in the middle of the past century. I keep a picture

on my desk of some Hungarian Jewish children and an elderly woman walking toward the gas chambers. I often wonder what was in their minds.

The closest I came to anything approaching those horrible days was when I found myself in the midst of Romanian children with AIDS warehoused in inhumane conditions. But that was a long time ago when I had a lot more energy than I have now.

Gradually, I have found myself on the sidelines watching islands of bestiality continuing to surface in the ocean of history. I suspect many who read these words find themselves in a similar situation. The beginning point may be different from mine but the growing frustration is probably similar. And so we all watch terrorism, counterterrorism, mass killings, torture; and a great part of it being justified as necessary evils, sometimes by my countrymen.

I stand here on this cold morning looking back with dissatisfaction on so many events in the years I have walked this earth. I wear a warm cap knitted by my friend the poet Lisa Jarnot in The 100 Caps for Peace project. Mine is #65 and is worn in memory of Khalid, a 14 year-old Afghan boy gunned down by an American helicopter as he was gathering wood in the bitter cold of February 2011. Khalid was the sole support of his family of 13 sisters and 2 mothers.

How feeble it is to wear a cap, keep a picture, think about atrocious days gone by. But that is what we do as we grow older. If you haven't discovered that you will. So we keep on remembering because, as Elie Wiesel wrote in *Night*, "To forget the dead would be akin to

killing them a second time.”

Well, both the robin and I are still here shivering. And, he is thirsty. So I take my stick and break the ice in the fountain. I hit it much more than is necessary. But you need to do that sometimes.

I walk to the chapel. The robin drinks. Life goes on.

***Brother Toby***