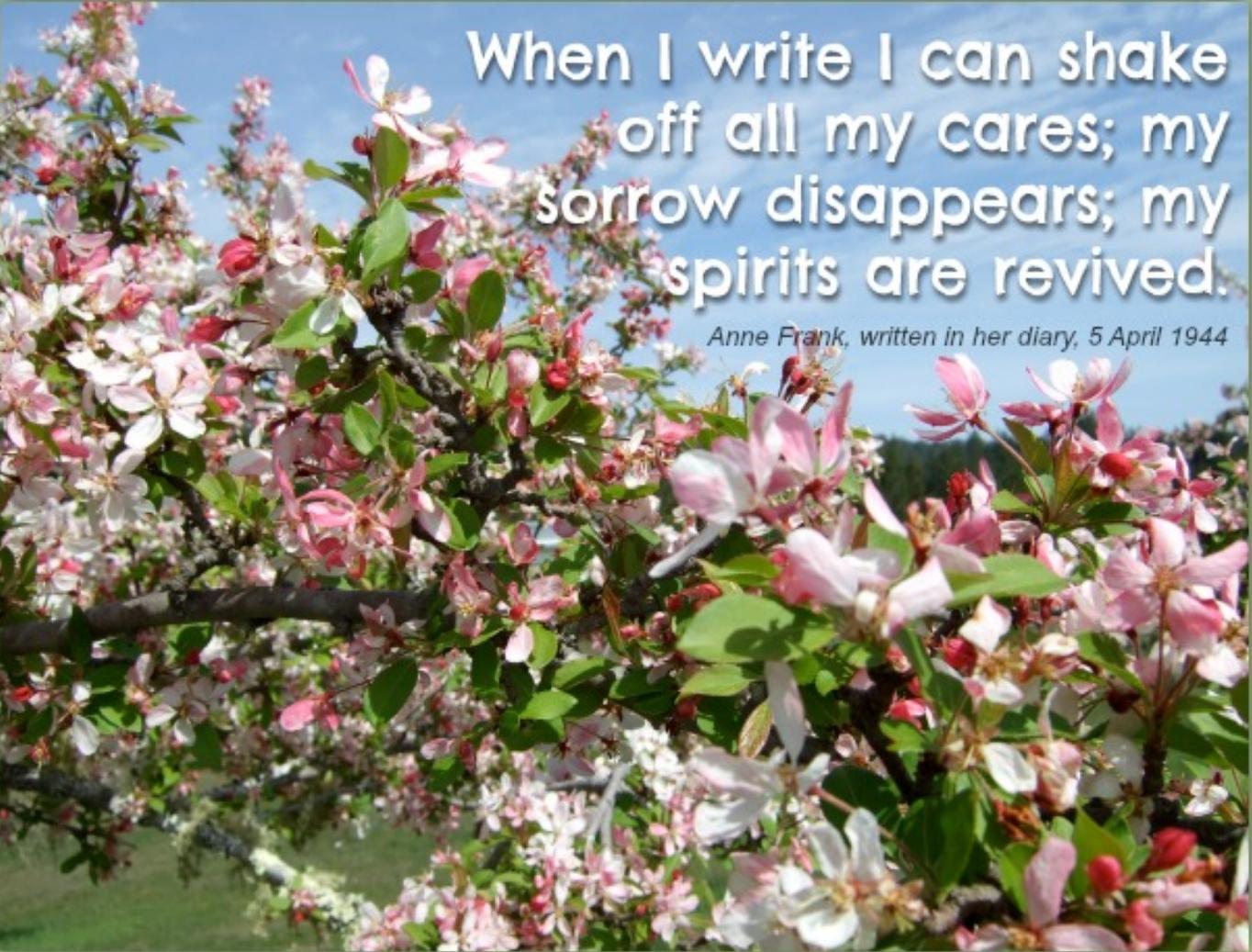


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When I write I can shake
off all my cares; my
sorrow disappears; my
spirits are revived.

Anne Frank, written in her diary, 5 April 1944

NEVER FORGET THESE THINGS

Tomorrow is International Holocaust Memorial Day. There is another remembrance day each year, which is a spiritual observance for the Jewish community — Yom HaShoah this year is from the evening of April 11 to the evening of April 12. But tomorrow is the day the entire international community is urged to remember the atrocious events occurring between 1933 and 1945, the systematic and methodical mass murder of so many people; Poles, Serbs, Roma, Jehovah Witnesses, “asocials” of many types, Nazi resistance fighters,

homosexuals, and most especially Jews. How many Jews? It's impossible to know exactly but it certainly was over 6 million!



What do I think about on this year's International Holocaust Memorial Day? The International Holocaust Trust has suggested a theme — *“Words can make a difference, both for good and for evil.”* At first this seems a rather mild theme for such a horrendous event, but the Nazis used words to



incite hatred. It usually starts with words. That has been the case with subsequent genocides since 1945. Indeed, it is one of the very troubling things poisoning our country today. Words are the first weapons of racists and white supremacists; the tools of propaganda leading to organized hatred and violence.



One of the people I think of on this day, and often, is Etty Hillesum (1914–1942) — Etty was Dutch and would have been considered by many as a secular Jew. She studied psychology and the mystics of many different religious backgrounds. Etty probably could have managed to escape arrest and deportation but her family could not so she chose to be with her family. They were sent first to Westerbok, a holding camp in the Netherlands, where she wrote,

The sky is full of birds, the purple lupines stand up so regally and the sun shining on my face – and right before our eyes, mass murder...The whole thing is simply beyond comprehension.

While being transported to Auschwitz, Etty wrote some beautiful lines on a postcard addressed to her friend in Amsterdam. She shoved it out of the moving freight car. The card was miraculously found by a Dutch farmer and eventually reached her friend — and the world,

And, Maria, if we just take care enough of each other, God is in safe hands with us despite everything.

Today I think mostly of Etty's sense of where the peace and goodness in the world begins. I think this is something we should never forget, no matter what spiritual path we are following,



Ultimately, we have just one moral duty:

*to reclaim large area of peace in ourselves,
more and more peace, and to reflect it toward others.*

*And the more peace there is in us,
the more peace there will*

also be in our troubled world.



Nothing much is known about young Pavel Friedmann, except for his

famous poem about a butterfly — the last butterfly. He was 17 when he wrote the poem and one of 15,000 children at the Theresienstadt Camp. Only a hundred of them survived. Pavel was not one of them. He was eventually deported to Auschwitz and murdered in 1944.

Here is part of *The Butterfly*,

He was the last. Truly the last.

Such yellowness was bitter and blinding

Like the sun's tear shattered on stone.

That was his true colour.

And how easily he climbed, and how high,

*Certainly, climbing, he wanted
To kiss the last of my world.*



I wonder if I will know when I see a butterfly for the last time. Pavel knew.



Gideon Klein (1919–1945) was a Czech pianist and composer born into Moravian Jewish family. He was forced to discontinue his musical studies when the Nazis closed all institutions of higher learning to Jews. Neither could his compositions be played. Using a false name, he was offered a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London. But anti-Jewish Czech legislation prevented his immigration. Gideon was deported to a concentration camp in 1941 where a



number of Jewish musicians kept up their musical life as best they could. 26 year old Gideon was deported to Auschwitz in October 1944, less than two weeks after completing his magnificent string trio. He was murdered in January 1945.

In recent years there have been a number of concerts featuring compositions of musicians whose work was disrupted by the Nazis. One of these featured Klein's string trio, which he never heard played. Starcross' violinist David McCarroll, a member of the Vienna Piano Trio, loves Klein's string trio and was invited to join colleagues at a memorial performance in Tel Aviv. (If you would like to hear the youtube recording just click on this link. David is the one on the left, in gray.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkAmsXlakEE>

Is it unreasonable to believe Gideon Klein was present in spirit — and will be every time this piece is played?



What more is there to say? Perhaps just a few words taken from a poem by Primo Levi — one of the few people to survive Auschwitz.

Consider that this has been . . .

Engrave these words on your hearts . . .

Repeat them to your children.

Brother Toby

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