

And Rachel Would Not Be Consoled

• *Deborah Schmitzer* •

These children of Shoah
Would have been my husband's brother and sister
Like rain and a dry season
Framed as a picture beside my piano
Small, rain undropped,

Uncloud my understanding of who you are

The elder, a boy
Fresh, curled crop of energy
Violin held with unexpected assurance
The younger, a girl, seated in a child's low chair
A careful gaze hemmed by her brother's solemnity

I do not remember your names.

I put this picture of you on the wall though I could barely look at the two of you
looking at me.

What gifts do I bring to undropped rain

When our own first born, the son of the right hand came
I placed a second picture of him above you.
This Canadian-made child with gentle curiosity
Lapped in his father's delight

I am dusting the piano for prints
Fresh from a Christmas holiday,
Full of its story
Flight, survival, life given again.
In this story heavy with voices
I hear once more that Rachel
Would not be consoled
Found no comfort in the virgin birth of her sister.

*Small brothers and sisters of resistance
Rivers run hard in the winter*

Two pictures, one atop the other in my living room on a safe street in a
medium-sized city
Here

Hung at eye level
Directly. Carefully
As prayer bends
to hold all the children caught in baskets
ice cubed in the river

*Yahweh in a manger
With Jews at the door
There's little left over
Does one keep the score?*

*If one child is risen
While others are lice
At least there's a movement
And welcome advice.*

*Pray now in the morning
Eat eggs in the Spring
If others are hungry
Teach them to sing.*

*Don't worry about babies
Not chosen to rise
The story though troubled
Brings hope to some wise*

*If someone is risen
And someone is not
Are there reasons for seasons
Of birth and begot*

*Tribes and the desert
Leavened and not*

*What virgin daughter
What second worth*