Lessons from the Past

Barbara Smallwood

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/platypus

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/platypus/vol2/iss1/47

This Artists in Words is brought to you for free and open access by the Kent State University at Ashtabula at Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Platypus by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. For more information, please contact earicha1@kent.edu, tk@kent.edu.
Lessons from the Past
Barbara Smallwood

Cattle cars of the trains
overloaded, groaning and grinding
their way towards certain death
Faces abound through the slats
some old and weary, already given up
others determined to survive the odds.
At the destination, doors are opened
people herded out like farm animals
beaten or kicked if they are too slow
had no food or water for days
standing room only, barely space to breathe.
Stationed in a line like bulls at slaughter
the selection now begins
Man who thinks he's God
pointing to the right or the left
one line to go straight to the showers
old, young, diseased, feeble
the other to a fate worse than death
starvation, disease, exposure to the elements
these also filled many a ditch and oven in these camps.
Millions and millions of nameless died
from hardship, cruelty, neglect
and unknown nameless experimentation.
Yet many survived and have lived to tell
of the horrors and monsters that were
praying deep in their hearts
that humankind of today will have
the wisdom, tolerance, and love
to never do the same.