



We, The Six Million Murdered People Speak

This poem was written by the late Rabbi Davin Schoenberger, a native of Germany and Chief Rabbi in Aachen Germany. He was the rabbi who married Anne Frank's parents.

Davin and Ilse Schoenberger and their daughter, Elaine (Katz), fled Europe after their synagogue in Aachen was burned to the ground during the events of *Kristallnacht* on November 9, 1938. In the U.S., Rabbi Schoenberger had pulpits in Chicago, IL and Selma, AL. Upon his retirement in 1960, Rabbi Schoenberger resided in Birmingham until his death in 1989.

A dramatic reading by Brian Kurlander is available in the Curriculum Links under "Remembrance."

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Men, women, and children living and laughing once
Like you, we who were suffocated in overstuffed freight trains
By brutish Nazis who crushed the skulls of infants, we,
Pushed into gas-filled chambers, beaten to death,
Forced to dig the trenches into which our starved bodies
Were catapulted and heaped to little mountains,
We, the six million Jewish martyrs raised our silenced voices
Incessantly and speak to you and you and you:

" FOR US, THE VICTIMS OF BLOODTHIRSTY TERROR
Which humankind contrived to be the instrument of power,
You shall not weep or grieve as mourners used to do.
Ours is no grave. No tombstone promulgates our names,
No date, nor any pious record of our death,
Nor gentle words of eulogy and testimonial
Pronounced a last farewell when we were buried.

And now, we do not want your tears. The soothing flow
Of tears endows with gentle solace the desponding soul.
Be ne'er consoled! Your consolation would be pernicious
To our memorial. Nor do we want the outbursts of your wrath.
Your lamentations ne'er bring us back.
We loathe the "ifs" and "buts," the arguments and questions
Of your debate, your clever reasons
Disputing why the world has failed us.
What is it good for? See, our blissful song broke off,
Just when our lips were moved to form the rhyme.
Our days were torn to bits long before sunset's dawn.

Nay, we want you! We want your entire life,
Your pulsing heart to be our last repose.
We want the ocean of your thoughts prepared
To carry on its waves our immortality.
Through the unfastened sluices of our spirits
Streams of our strength will join your ready souls.
We will survive in you. We ask your mind to be
Our monument whose imprint bears our names.
You be the vessel of our thwarted hopes
Of our frustrated love and uncompleted work.

O, lend us your tongue and pronounce those words
Of fondness, friendship, brotherhood and love
Which beastly hatred murdered with our life.

Grant us your eyes to fill them with your vision,
Ears to listen to enchanting music.
We want to do your deeds, your sacrifices.
We want to walk your ways to reach your goals.
Carry our memory not like a heavy yoke
Which wistfully your weary shoulders bear,
Yet, like a crown committing you to duty
Of justice, harmony and peace for all.
Ennoble us and you. Restore the dignity of man,
The rulership of God, perverted and debased
By human madness. Change by your loyal deeds
The horror of our fate in destiny, divine."