And then it came

He bashed me with names, Rammala, Lodze, Kalkiliya, Warsaw,
Slowly memory bubbled from nausea deep in my coffee filled belly.
I remembered my grandmother’s black teeth.
The rotten teeth of a blind woman,
Putrid smelly rotten teeth,
Sitting on the corner of the street which had incarcerated her, and then her children,
Hoping that death would finally realize that she had been long overlooked, and be kind enough to pick her up.
This is how she lived her last 5 years.
Waiting for death at the corner.
She would have called to try and hurry it up, offering catalyst peppermint chewing gum and deodorant.
They always seemed to be on some kind of sale.
But the diabetes finally beat the hemoglobin down to minimal presence and A4 size pages were just too small.
Numbers on enormous pages on a wall. On wall paper that hid the decay
The empty dinner table despair
The morning horror at waking to another day
Of waiting
Of eating microwave dinner neglect.
A smell even the overshadowing deodorant and peppermint chewing gum couldn’t disguise.

And then it came.
Cancer
Or heart failure
Or advanced diabetes which lead to cancer
Or, heart failure.
Nazis who lead to the murder of her sick baby brother
Nazis who imprisoned her frozen fingered salt selling mother.
The blonde sneaking through cracks in a wall.
Squeezing through racist intentions.
Where the low and virile smell of rotten potatoes lined the streets of my grandmother’s childhood memories.
Flowers couldn’t grow in ghettos.
And if they did, what kind of perfume would a flower have that grows in mutilated soil?
Watered with inferior blood and urine,
Ashes and ignorance.
Little baby brother bodies broken against a wall.
Screaming and screaming and screaming
And then eternally silent.

In my country you can buy two deodorants for the price of one almost everyday and you don’t have to smell anything wrong.
But sometimes sixty five year old grandmothers, who look 90, sit on carefree street corners
Flashing their blackened moldy teeth.
And sometimes they fall on the side walks, on dog shit and dead cat’s corpses and fumble their way up, alone, the disgusting creatures.
Slowly hobbling, tripping snail like limps leading by memory back to the only home they ever knew besides Lodge, or Warsaw or Auschwitz,
Which was supposed to be better than that.
Sometimes they forget to wash, because they’re already immune to the smell of hell
Pilling mounds of blind detective work on bath tub walls.
Before diabetes made her finally numb.
Before she stopped yelling and crying, howling for justice,
For a little god damn attention.
Before god lost his sense of humor.
So she tried to read the numbers on the wall, pasted by the feeble blind hands of a chewing gum mother.

The next day she was discovered by her son.
Who took her away.
At the hospital they said yes,
This exemplifies neglect,
Perhaps even malpractice,
Or maybe the Nazis.
But she could either have heart disease or cancer of the stomach
Or kidneys or lungs or gallbladder or colon or intestines or perhaps diabetes which lead to failure,
Or something
And she definitely needs treatment so were going to give her radiation.
Why would she want to die
When waves of light can breathe
For her, beaming health into a tin frame body?
Dripping needles of nourishment through a paste of plastic skin
So she won’t have to chew or taste anything,
Because she hasn’t tasted anything since she found out god was rooting for the other team.

She expired with an artificial vein peeping practically through the rim of her nostrils, Intruding.
Circulating the two percent of red blood cells she had left,
In a nun’s hospital of all places
In the holy land.
In the land of the Jews.

I am standing in New York listening to the men on Union square call me,
The Jews of Israel –
Nazis

Danielle Zilberberg
And I remembered my grandmothers black teeth and ran to the corner
To blacken my own.