Not alone

I was alone
When my friends refused to talk to me
Their daunting stares
Sinister whispers
Shadows trailing us
"Die Juden sind unser Unglück"
We were alienated
For foolish reasons
Forced from businesses
Thrown from homes
Isolated from communities
We had to leave our lives behind
And flee to unknown lands
Foreign places
Where people whispered in unfamiliar tongues
Everywhere we went
Doors were closing
Before we even had a chance to introduce ourselves
The race towards death had begun.

I was not alone
When sweet Adele
A German schoolgirl
Refused to let the boys throw rocks at me
She knew I was a good person
It did not matter that I was
Jewish
An outcast
A disgrace to society
A misfortune
She was not afraid
To stand up against the world
Which opposed her
She was
A small drop in an ocean
A speck in the universe
But she made such a difference
I decided
I would be like her
Not afraid
To make a difference
To let my voice be heard
I would find hope
Even in the darkest of times
When life has become an endless night.

I was alone
When they forced us to march
Across the desolate land
For hours on end
The heat unbearable
Cold insufferable
Hunger intolerable
Pain unrelenting
My family
Gone without a trace
They were taken away at the war’s start
When they took the healthy
The strong
The unbreakable
And broke them.

I was not alone
When I was walking to my death
A man with a heart of pure gold
Threw me a crust of bread
He was not afraid of the Nazis
The face of death
Who were ruthless predators
Just waiting to pounce
This made did a small act of courage
That saved my life
I had nothing to eat
But this morsel of bread
Gave me strength
To keep fighting
I was starved
Exhausted
On the brink of death
But with the heart of a lion.
I was alone
When they took away my identity
Stripped of the one thing that was mine
I was named A7713
Demeaned to a letter and a number sequence
Forced to shave my head
Remove my clothes
Live in shame
Auschwitz
A nightmare
Horror
Succubus
The food was scarce
Water unreliable
Labor grueling
I was sick
Tired
Lost
Almost cracked under
pressure
A living skeleton
On the brink of
collapsing
With no one to lean on.

I was not alone
When I was woken in the middle of the night
Startled
But no longer afraid
Explosions in the distance
Cannons going off one by one
Sounds that would usually incite terror
Gave me hope
The Red Army was near
Our saviors
Liberators
Guardian angels
For the first time in what seems like a lifetime
Someone was there for me
Freeing me
From this endless night.
I was alone
When I had no one to turn to
My persecutors gone
But I was still
fragile
And needed support
I missed Germany like the sky misses the sun at night
But I didn’t belong there
Everywhere I went
People stared
Whispered in foreign languages
Taunted in words I couldn’t understand
I was broken
Lost
Just lived through the unthinkable
Frail
Delicate
But I had the hands of a survivor
And I would build a world with them.

I was not alone
When I was surrounded by fellow outcasts
The ones who didn’t fit in
Gazing at a welcoming sight
A statue that represents the virtues of a new nation
Liberty Enlightening the World
A new land
That would become my home
Whose people would protect me
A second chance
A new beginning
From ruins I built myself a home
From ashes I created a new life
From the outcasts I established a family
And I promised myself
I would be brave
And help those in the position I found myself years ago.
She was not alone
When the people shamed her
Because of the shade of her skin
Darker than their preference
She was an outcast
But she would never be abandoned
I talked to her
Made her feel welcome
Defended her
When others made her a target
I gave her hope
In a world with a heart of stone.

He was not alone
When no one would accept him
Because he wasn’t like the others
He was disabled
Flawed
Imperfect
But with a heart of gold
Those whispers
Those faces
They could get to a person
I welcomed him
Took him under my wing
Gave him a friend
Gave him strength to survive
To do the unimaginable.