Content warning: Covers the ableist violence and genocide of the Nazi T4 program. Contains euphemistic language utilized by the perpetrators. For a discussion of the historical context, theoretical considerations, and poetic interventions of this poem, please see the accompanying essay: "Where are we going?' with T4 Postmemory: Creative Writing as Vicarious Witnessing"

Smoke & Ash

Some families fought so they were deemed abusive & neglectful & the children were taken away for their own protection.

Most simply didn't know, for they were told these new facilities were erected to offer the best *in therapeutic care*.

Several begged for their kin to be put to death for that surely wasn't life.

& the big grey busses came & went,

ignoring cries of "where are you taking us?" casting long

long shadows & some 300,000 beautifully 'broken' people to their deaths.

The dark smoke rose & thick, could not erase the marked bodies.

Death certificates falsified, soon-to-be corpses

shuffled through multiple locations, inevitable end post... poned

for the sole purpose of

concealment.

Mass piles of ashes divided &

delivered,

stamped from places that did not exist,

journeyed to surviving family

with bits of others' personal effects

proof

this indeed was

not sweet Susanne

come home

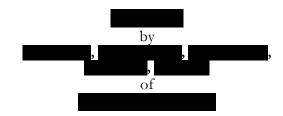
to

rest.

MURDER

firing squad, lethal injection, gas inhalation, suffocation, starvation

FELLOW PEOPLE



murder [REDACTED]

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medical procedures of disinfection, treatment

by firing squad, lethal injection, gas inhalation, suffocation, starvation [REDACTED]

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natural causes, a humane putting to sleep, euthanasia, mercy death

An illegal & thus bureaucratic order 1939-1941 sanctioned the death & destruction of clandestine

fellow people [REDACTED]

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degenerates & defectives,
feeble-minded cripples,
empty human shells,
ballast existences,
horrible counterparts of real humans,
lives unworthy of life,

accused of suffering & wasting & thus of medicalized genocide through 1945. away worthy

All we have of them is an estimate, an incomplete roster of names, yet in the form of insult rather than diagnosis, somehow the term "idiot" remains.

The same medical systems once designed to kill us are now meant to treat us & the smoke of those disassembly lines, now colorless, still hovers, noxious.