The Darkest of Days Though the Brightest of Flames

As a Jew, there is more I want to know,
But my father says the process is slow.
"You are too young to learn Kabbalah" he says,
But being deeply observant is my quest.

Then one day, Nazi soldiers come and invade,
No, not a festival, nor a parade.
They tell us what we can and can’t do,
Then they evacuate all of the Jews.

We board the train at a fast pace,
The Nazi soldiers leave no trace.
We may be going somewhere better than before,
But we also will be going to a place of horror.

I meet a woman named Madam Schacher,
She screamed, "Fire, Fire!" and there was no laughter.
Everyone thought she had lost her mind,
Because of flames that we could not find.

The train had stopped and we unloaded,
Then we saw an officer heavily coated.
Splitting men to the left and women to the right,
And of my sister and mother, that was my last sight.
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We had to be a certain age to survive,

So to live, we had to lie.

Father was 40 and I was 18,
Nothing older or younger, just between.

We realize we are in Birkenau,
Staying with father is my vow.
We see people being shot and burned,
And then there was something that I had learned.

This is not a place of good and well being,
A place of nightmares is what I am seeing.
We see male prisoners being beaten and shaved,
You could tell in their faces it was mercy they craved.

That night, I did not get much slumber,
Then I get tattooed a number.
I wondered what number I would be,
It was A-7713.

After that I see my cousin, Stein,
He asks about his family and I say they’re fine.
He hears that I had made it up and lied,
We assumed he gave up hope and died.
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We arrive is Buna, a dead and empty town,
A doctor says he wants my gold crown.
I tell him things that are the truth,
That is how I kept my gold tooth.

Some Sunday, there is an air raid,
A man ventured out and the price, he had paid.
“'A curse on Germany, long live liberty’"
Said a Polish man who was hanged for his trickery.

For Rosh Hashanah, all the Jews gather together,
But during that holiday, nothing got better.
I started to think I should rebel against God,
Because I had thought he was a crook and a fraud.

For Yom Kippur, I refused to fast,
To please my father, stay strong, and last.
Our leader tells how to pass selection,
Dr. Mengele and his men start the inspection.

In January, my foot begins to swell,
I go to the doctor who says I’m not well.
I stay and rest, not a time to celebrate,
Then we are all called to evacuate.
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I go back to camp and there is a rumor of attack,
We evacuate again and there is no coming back.

As we run through the heavy snow,
We hear the continuing voice saying "Go, go, go!"
I think to myself, "Don’t think, just run,"
Because if I stop, I’ll be shot by a gun.

When we rest, Juliek plays his violin,
The next day he was killed because it was Beethoven.
We are pushed and forced onto a train,
Then we get off on an unknown terrain.

Turns out we get out at Buchenwald,
A dozen get off out of the hundreds hauled.

Later I learn that my father is ill,
Me taking care of him is not a thrill.
Sadly, my father did not make it through,
We always stuck together like glue.

After that, nothing much mattered to me,
Months later, the Allies set us free.
A corpse with no happiness or cheer,
That is what I see of myself in the mirror.