

FROM NAZI GERMANY TO MY NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE  
by Ingeborg Siller

I was born and raised to age 13 in Nazi Germany, sheltered from the storm of war by my grandmother in the town of Kruezburg on the Polish border. Despite separation from my parents, despite the drone of American airplanes overhead on their way to bomb Berlin, my childhood was not touched by fear or hate or horror --- not until a late night pounding on our shuttered windows warned us that the Russians were coming. The bombs over Berlin had ended World War II in Germany, but now a new enemy --- communism --- was threatening our freedom and our lives. With the Russian army less than two hours away, we needed to catch a 7:00 am train that would take us out of eastern Germany to the West. In the rush and confusion of catching that train I became separated from my beloved grandmother. That train and many friends saved my life. I was reunited with my parents, but I never saw my grandmother again.

After many experiences my family's flight ended in Bavaria, deep in the safety of American occupation. On the first Saturday of June, 1945 --- four weeks after the war in Germany ended --- my mother sent me 7 kilometers to the town of Siegenburg to purchase a thank you gift for the family who had taken us into their home. As I walked that lonely road I saw an American army transport truck and two G.I.'s with rifles over their shoulders. I said, "Hi. How are you?" but I did not get an answer. A few feet after I passed them I was suddenly grabbed from behind. A hand covered my mouth as I was roughly turned around to face one of the G.I.'s. He slid his hands around my neck and squeezed. Strangling me, he dragged me into the woods, kicking me as he went. The choking and the kicking were so violent, so painful that I couldn't stand it anymore and I pleaded God to take me. The next thing I knew I was above my body looking down. I saw the soldier throw my limp body to the ground. He kicked me one last time, but what a surprise --- I did not feel any pain! I watched him go back to the truck. His buddy gave him back his rifle and they left.....

What is most remarkable about this is that while I was being strangled I distinctly felt that I was being "protected" or overseen by an invisible presence. I have come to believe that this presence is with all people who are murdered so that in some way we are made to know that we are being looked after. Even as I was being murdered, I felt reassured in a way I cannot describe.

I don't know how I got there, but I next found myself standing on a hazy pass surrounded by colors that were white, light blue-grey and pink. In front of me stood a large portal, like a cathedral door. It was not attached to a building but the door was 20 - 30 feet high and was opened just a little bit. From this opening streamed a bright, bright light. I felt an indescribable sense of love and peace; I never felt so welcomed and loved as this. Suddenly I felt the presence of my grandmother. Although I couldn't actually see her, I felt her presence and knew that I was surrounded by her loving vibrations. And then just as suddenly I experienced every thought and emotion that I had ever had in my life. I became aware of the horror and the beauty of all that I had lived, and realized the wrongfulness of hate and how important it is to let all hate go.

I regained consciousness some time later. Six months after my attack I learned that my grandmother had been taken by the Russians and had starved to death. With her last strength she kept calling my name.

Looking back, I realize that I learned a tremendous amount about the value of avoiding hate and the need to love. I believe that my experience was a lesson that I was "meant" to learn, that I had to go through this. I am convinced that there is a reason for everything and that even from evil and horror good can come. If today I met the soldier that tried to kill me, I would have to express to him my gratitude for his part in a higher drama that caused me to learn so much.