

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Zahava Sweet: "Der Meister"

Zahava Sweet · Thursday, April 26th, 2012

Zahava Sweet is the author of *The Return of Sound*, of which Robert Bly says: "I like the generosity of all these poems, but I particularly admire the difficult poems that take place at Ravensbruck concentration camp during the second world war. Poems of this sort require great tact and human centering. She has them." "Der Meister" can be found in *The Return of Sound*, © 2005, [Bombshelter Press](#).

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### Der Meister

A slight man you were  
with your freckled face  
and brown cap.  
You supervised our work  
at the aviation factory,  
we marched to each dawn  
from Ravensbruck  
concentration camp.  
Beneath the table  
where I worked  
you let me wash  
the only undergarment  
I possessed,  
warming the water  
with a torch.  
When the "Boots" came near  
you tapped me lightly  
with your foot  
and I jumped up  
to my place  
at the table.  
You brought tidbits  
of cookie,  
the forbidden chocolate candy,  
a piece of banana.  
I ate them in the bathroom

praying no one would find me.  
You told me  
The Gestapo would kill us all  
before the war's end.  
Herr Meister,  
you promised to hide me  
in your cellar.  
One day you disappeared  
and in your place stood  
a hard-mouthed man  
who didn't talk to me.  
I worried, Herr Meister  
you might have been punished  
for your kindness.  
For decades I looked  
for your freckled face  
and small hands  
with that wart on your forefinger.

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