

## Memorial, Paris

In the Jewish quarter of the Marais  
a small inconspicuous building.  
I ring the bell and I'm frisked in the lobby.  
I pay my francs to the woman at the desk.

Through glass doors, I see  
a monument in a small courtyard.  
Round like a cauldron,  
names etched in a never-ending circle.  
Auschwitz, Dauchau, Treblinka.  
The sculpture shines the blue-black bruises  
against the Paris sky.

The doors to the courtyard are locked.  
I sit on a hard chair and stare through the windows.  
On a bulletin board, newspaper clippings  
about a survivor searching for her family,  
a drawing of Rachel crying for her children.

Trees shelter the small yard.  
Beside black wrought-iron benches, hangs  
a mural of Jews praying and dancing.  
Beyond the wooden fence, the bustle of streets,  
here, only stillness.

Returning to the desk,  
I tell the woman,  
"C'est beau."  
She surveys my windbreaker, my running shoes.  
"Beau? Pas tellement."  
She pats her hair, straightens her glasses.  
"C'est bon, les Jeunes viennent au memorial.  
Ils se souviennent."

I want to tell her  
I live with the Holocaust every day.  
Carry my loss  
like an iron bolt  
weighing down shoulders,  
constricting neck.

I want to tell her  
I remember when  
I look at my father  
and I see a boy  
sitting on a bench alone.

I remember when  
people talk excitedly  
about the fun of genealogy  
and I only see Nazi records of names and numbers.

"Oui, c'est beau"  
I tell her  
and I reach for the door.

*Jacquie Buncel*