

OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal

Volume 2 *Memory & Reflection*

Article 22

2014

Reflective Insight: "Reflection and Renewal"

Ross Patterson
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ourj>



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Patterson, Ross (2014) "*Reflective Insight: "Reflection and Renewal"*," *OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal*: Vol. 2 , Article 22.

DOI: 10.25777/eykz-c411

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ourj/vol2/iss1/22>

This Reflection is brought to you for free and open access by ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal by an authorized editor of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

Ross Patterson

Reflection and Renewal

One thing that struck me during our visit to Auschwitz II Birkenau was the actions of a flock of small birds amid the ruins of Crematorium III. Before we left, Emma read a Kaddish prayer by a memorial in between the ruins of two destroyed crematoria. Shortly after she began, something, probably the few visitors over near the area, startled a sizable flock of probably fifty to a hundred yellow-brown finches or sparrows that then rose in a 'butterfly fight' column akin to a tornado from the area of Crematorium III's gas chamber. Once they reached about ten feet off the ground, the formation broke and formed a more nebulous, atom-like cloud that buffeted in a breeze as it advanced and settled into the old furnace area. I thought that it was a beautiful natural moment to witness in such a place. It seemed like one of those instances where nature was healing an old wound, reclaiming the shattered husk of a ruined edifice once meant for destruction and transforming it into a haven for the small and defenseless. It is a fitting, unintentional memorial in itself, bringing life back to a place built solely to take it away.