

September 18th, 2022, Gili Pliskin

My grandmother Dora. Safta Dora, in Hebrew.

One of the most meaningful people I had in my life.
It's hard to imagine. Difficult to grasp. Truly unbelievable.
Everything that happened to you. Everything you've been
through. It is totally unbelievable.

You lost your beloved mother Sabina when you were 10. She dies unexpectedly here in Vienna, the city she loved most. She is buried here. When you finally finished school you moved here with your family - your father Szaja, your stepmother Sophia, your sisters Gena and Lotka and your brother Manek. You loved it here and had a full, happy and colorful life. You lived here, in this apartment when the Nazis started to gain power. You were smart and new you would have to get out of here and leave the life you loved. You and your sister Gena, your father and stepmother - you all applied for a Visa to anywhere else in the world - the US, the UK, Palestine and Poland. This was in April 1938. No one listened to you. No one granted either of you a way out. How frustrating it must have been to know trouble was coming and be dependent on someone for the right to move freely.

On November 9th 1938 - also known as Kristalnacht - you were brutally dragged out of your home, in this building on the third floor, in your night gown. Your sister Gena and your parents altogether. You had no idea this will be the last time you will be home. You had no idea this will be the last time you see your parents, who were deported to Poland and later on murdered in Rymanov. You had no idea you would be thrown in Jail (the first of many), deported, tortured and sent to Auschwitz (where you spent 8 months, nearly died of Typhus and lived to tell). You had no idea you will survive this hell and end up in a concentration camp in Lvov where surprisingly your life turned for the better.

You met the love of your life, Boris Pliskin, my grandfather - who saw your beautiful soul beyond the 34kg skeleton that you were - and fell in love with you. Together you managed to escape, get married and end up in Foehrenwald - a camp for displaced persons in the outskirts of Munich - where you reunited with your sister Gena, who also survived, and where my Father Yosi, your one and only beloved son who is standing here today, was born. After a few years you moved to Israel-Palestine, rehabilitated your life and lived them fully and happily, despite the atrocities you've been through.

You were a very vibrant woman. A Lady with lust for life. You liked to enjoy yourself, travel, eat, party and laugh. You had a crazy sense of humor and everything reminded you of a joke. Just like my dad. All this makes it even harder to believe all that you've been through. You lost your husband, Boris, way too early, and remained heartbroken. And as difficult as this was - you still chose life. To me you were the sweetest most loving grandmother in the world. You were like the sun. You spread your warmth generously and I always felt special and wanted and loved. It was truly heartbreaking, for all of us, to lose you so early. Over 30 years ago. Way to early.

It is unbelievable that we are standing here today - in the very place you lived and loved, in the very place you were cruelty deported from - along with my parents, Yosi and Nava, my brother Barak and my sister Ruthie - and to pay our respects to you, safta Dora, to your sister Gena, to your father Szaja and to your other mother Sophia. It is awful what happened to all of you. We carry your pain with us always. We cannot undo it and cannot take it away but we are here to say you will always live in our hearts and will never ever be forgotten. Your family is alive and well and we miss you so much. Thank you for everything that you were. Thank you for the light, the love, the laughter and the inspiration. We love You, we admire you, we honor you.

May what happened to you, to your family, to our family, to millions all over the world (not only Jewish and not only in the holocaust) - never happen again. Let us here and now, together, wish and pray - each one in the way your heart feels is right - that all violence and racism and oppression and suffering and abuse - that is still happening today - come to an end. May we open our hearts, learn to empathize with each others pain and realize we are all one. And may all living creatures live in freedom, peace, justice, love and happiness. Together we can change the world. I truly believe this. And I really hope we will

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