

## **A dream I had the night before finishing the study drawing of Belzec.**

March 20, 1994

In my dream I was both participant and observer, child and adult. I, as an adult, was drawing, and at the same time I was a young child, perhaps two or three years old, standing within the emulsion of an old photograph. I recognized myself as I look in old photos from Poland.

Then, a man comes to me and takes me by my small hand. He is kind, and his touch is gentle. I feel an incredible warmth emanating from him. He proceeds to lead me through the inside of the photograph of a group of people at some gathering. We walk inside the emulsion, just below the surface of the paper; at the same time that I, as an adult, am on the outside, looking at the photograph and drawing. The man tells me that he is my uncle, or my father's brother. I knew both of my father's brothers, and this man is not one of them, yet warmth, not fear, are the overwhelming vibrations that I feel from him. He is my uncle, I know this with my whole being.

We walk past other faces, and come to the face of a man in the upper right side of the photograph. The face we are looking at is gentle, with a quizzical smile. I somehow know this face. The man, who is still holding me by my baby hand, says, "That is a picture of me. I am your uncle." The face I am looking at is kind and warm, yet the eyes are strange. They are different, and I try to think of what they remind me of. At first glance they look like the shiny eyes of a cat, then they look hollow, like a polarized photograph. Finally, I realize that they look flat, milky and dull, like the eyes of a dead fish. I feel no terror or fear, but an amazing warmth.

Again, the man says, "I am your uncle." I am both inside and outside of the photograph. The child-me is still holding the man's hand, while the adult-me is drawing the man's face. I can clearly observe my hand holding the charcoal as I draw. His dark eyes and hair are being abstracted as the charcoal makes its marks on the paper. His eyebrows, and the locks of his dark hair are changing into patterns of fields and woods that I immediately recognize as the drawing of the aerial view of Belzec.

I have been working on this drawing, with great difficulty, for two months. His forehead becomes a clearing, and one lock of his hair becomes a darker stripe of a field, in the upper right hand side of the drawing, right above the site of the death camp. Just then I wake up.

Instantly I realize that the man who led me to the face in the photograph, the face with the strange eyes, is my uncle Mojsie Lieberman. I know his face only from an old photograph taken in Poland before the war. He was the husband of my mother's sister Lajcia. She, her husband and their children were gassed at Belzec. I told the dream to my wife Sara. She put her arms around me, and I lay there, facing the other way, overcome with silent tears.

The first thing I did the next morning was to go to my studio and look at the drawing. Just as when they were first brought to my awareness in my dream, in the same place on the drawing, two dark circular spots, flat and dull, are looking out at me. Somehow I felt liberated, and was able to complete the drawing, my hand knowing where to place each mark.



Arie A. Galles, Preparatory Drawing Station Four: Belzec. 30" x 42", charcoal and white Conté.