

Gustawa Nussbaum With Friends



This is my mom Gustawa Nussbaum with friends. I don't remember their names. This is the only picture of mom I have. It was taken in Cracow in the 1930s.

A few photographs survived because my father, Juda Nussbaum, had given them to a lady called Wladzia. Father had told me where he was leaving what - I even had it written down on a piece of paper, but no-one would give me anything back. Wladzia alone, the poorest of all of them, she really was very poor, she alone gave me everything back. I mean the photographs, Mom's silver powder box, which I have to this day, and a ring. Nothing particularly valuable, but nostalgic.

Mom had her secondary school certificate. She kept house. She was very modest, the home-bird type. She had a lot of interests. She used to go to the theater, to cafes. Mom worried because I didn't want to eat, and she was afraid, the poor thing, that I would be hungry. So at night she would put some cake on the night table that I had by my bed. I used to devour them, because I was hungry, because I didn't want to eat, out of spite. And in the morning Mom would get up and say, 'Who ate the poor child's cake?' And I would sit mum, 'I don't know, perhaps someone came and ate it. I didn't eat anything, absolutely.' 'Poor child, somebody ate it all up.' I didn't want to eat anything, because I knew that they would worry. Evidently I wanted to be important. Because otherwise I would have eaten, but something wouldn't let me, out of spite. Later, in the camp, when I remembered, if I had just a crumb of that cake ? I sinned terribly, not wanting to eat.

Mom was shot in 1939, at home, by Germans who were taking away the furniture. She tried to stop them and they shot her. I don't know where she's buried. We weren't allowed to have funerals. They took her to somewhere in Podgorze and there, I don't know, whether in a mass grave? I don't know anything. I was at school then, because the schools hadn't been closed. And all I remember is that I came back, our janitor was standing in the gateway and said, 'Toska, you don't have a mommy any more!' That's all I know; there was nobody there when it happened.