F1 Wounded Souls: Ceija Stojka



“When we got out, we were ill, completely ill! Our hearts were wounded; our heads, our souls were ill ... Those people should all have been given treatment. They should not have had children for five, six years - the few who did get out, who were still there - until they had enough strength, were healthy again, were able to laugh again and see that the world is not so bad ... And the fear, always the fear. The children grew up with it. That is why they still turn round when they walk the streets today. Do you understand? They turn round. Only someone who is afraid turns round! Somebody who emerges ill from the camp, whose head hurts and soul bleeds for a father, a sister, a brother who never came out can only have children that are also wounded in their souls. They come into this world, you see how sweet they are, how beautiful. You raise them and care for them, you kiss them and love them. They grow up. But the fear that was in you flows to the children with their mothers’ milk.”

1920 1953 1961

Did you know

... that Ceija Stojka’s book “We Live in Seclusion”, which was published in 1988, was one of the first books telling the tragic fate of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust from a survivor’s point of view?

Your task

Choose a sentence from Ceija Stojka’s text that moves you most. Discuss it in small groups.

About the photo

Ceija Stojka (1933 - 2013), a survivor of Auschwitz, with her daughter Silvia in 1953. Documentation Centre of Austrian Roma, Vienna, Austria.

https://www.romasintigenocide.eu/en/f