

Shoes

I visited the empty shoes
twenty years ago:
my mind and heart
return again and again.

Those empty shoes,
hundreds of thousands upon
hundreds of thousands,
piled higher than the roof.

Brown shoes, black shoes,
white shoes, work shoes, frightened shoes,
tired shoes, lonely shoes, polished shoes -
at rest behind the cattle cars without their cattle.

Hard to tell men-from-women shoes,
old-people shoes from young-people shoes,
Jew-from-Gentile shoes
and very hard to see the little shoes

of the child who screams
as mother releases her hand
and walks to the right.

By Arlin Buyert

