

## the museum

The museum was created  
to confront the enormity of The Conclusion.

6 million people dead.

What should I do but wonder,  
or cry, or scream in disbelief?

6 million people.  
Individuals, with stories and lives made less  
important by sheer magnitude,  
their common fate absorbed into  
Catastrophe.

What did I do?  
Shut down, unable to comprehend  
the innate, grotesquely pertinent point  
of The Burning —  
from 6 million people dead  
not a drop of humanity survived.

The Museum sought  
to recapture humanity lost  
by displaying recovered artifacts.

The most personal of items,  
confiscated luggage, in piles, personal effects  
spilling out of a re-created train.

And shoes, a small mountain of leather  
remains, surrendered by their owners.

And hair. A plasticine case, lining the wall,  
filled to brimming with hair, every color. Pounds  
and pounds of the hair of the shorn:

Still here, I find no humanity.

Simply  
too  
much

To understand,  
To believe.

Even if I were there,  
in Aushwitz, Treblinka, Dauchau,  
running my hands through smoldering ashes  
of the freshly burned,  
still. Even then,  
their humanity would intermingle  
with a thousand others.

Still, then,  
I would not understand.

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Victoria Woods