

Judaism 101. Temple Israel

Eva Paddock

I joined the class to learn to be a Jew.

How can this be true with a Gabbi Grandfather,
leading a home where Mother prayed at Shabbat every Friday?
(But not in my lifetime)

How can this be true, a kindertransport child at four,
my label, as on luggage, round my neck?
6 3 9 my number.

How can this be true, at sixty three
a life lived happily, in Methodism, Nothingism, Unitarianism?

I joined the class to learn what is a Jew?

The How, the Why, the Where and When
Those ultimate Jewish questions waiting always to be answered
For me, why now, these questions long dormant, fast asleep,
deep-hidden in the soul?

In class, these questions, focus of us all,
point for answers not to the head, but to a different place
where voice of heart and head together,
ponder loud, unhidden, unbidden, unashamed, and awake.

I joined the class and I have learned

Jew I am, and much confirmed, affirmed
by history, birth and world events I find my questions gone,
exempt.

Mechanics missing? Rules and Laws, the Language?
Sure a part of what I need for Torah reading, depth of meaning,
But non-essential, I now know, for life of spirit or believing.
Temple sitting, celebrating, eating all, communicating,
Each a piece of Jewish Living, setting silver, mitzvot giving,
But in the inner landscape only, is the garden of our being.
Growing answers we are seeking, bearing fruits of life-long living.

In appreciation of Deborah Eisenbach-Budner