

Fern Sherrard – *The Travels of a Jew*

Of course Walter couldn't stay. He was a well-known Nazi hating Jew, he was a journalist, he had a column in a national paper; apparently they already had the plans in place. As soon as the Nazis were elected they would take his and then his families passports. Then there would be no escape and who knows what they would do to the Jews once they were in power. It was all Hitler's fault.

There was one reason why it would be hard to escape...Walter had influenza; there was no time to recover before so he had to go now with a temperature of 100.

The taxi journey from his house to the station was short, but sad knowing that this might be the last time he saw the paper shop on the corner, the recording studios and even his family home.

The station was a haze of chaos, smoke and the screeching breaks. Once he found his train in the maze of people he climbed on and collapsed into his seat, aching to the core. The compartment was small but light from the big windows was stretching across the side of it. Across from him was a glaring old woman who had a haughty expression; Walter was unaware of her gaze, he was too caught up in his own fuzzy head.

Walter soon fell into a haze of consciousness. He kept waking with a start, sweaty and worried thinking they were at the Swedish border. He dreamt he was checked, parted from his family and sent away to some camp where he was tortured and forced to work long painful hours with near to no food.

The landscape rushed past the window – a haze of greens and blues. One water droplet ran down the window like a tear down your face. Walter woke again wondering where he was.

Finally after what seemed like an eternity the train slowed and a man in blue uniform and cap came round to check people's passports. Although, with fatigue and blazing temperature, Walter sat bolt upright, his nails dug into his palms and his breath bated with the cold.

The uniformed man came closer. Walter's breaths became faster and shorter. In what seemed like no time at all, the man was knocking on the compartment door. The elderly woman sitting across him showed him her passport first and he stamped it with barely a look. Then it was his turn. Walter handed over his passport with clammy shaking hands. The man looked over his cap comparing the face on the passport to his own. After a few seconds that dragged on forever, he was satisfied and stamped it. He turned, deep breath, then looked back and asked "Do I know you?"

"No" said Walter, trying to be as convincing as possible. He was used to people asking him that but wasn't used to lying. The man turned and said under his breath, "I could swear I've seen him before" and was gone. Relief seeped through Walter's worn out body and his shoulders finally relaxed. He'd made it, but only just.