

4.1. “The Sonderkommando” by Lily Brett

*In Part 4 of **Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State**, we hear from several Sonderkommandos about the experiences of prisoners who were forced to remove bodies out of the gas chambers and transport them to the crematoria. Lily Brett was born in Germany after World War II but grew up in Australia. Thus she did not have direct experience in the camps. As a poet, however, she chose to write a poem about the Sonderkommando.*

*Source: From **The Auschwitz Poems** by Lily Brett. Melbourne: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd, 1986. Used with permission of the author.*

The Sonderkommando
those prisoners
known as
the Death Squad

merely
shuffled
death around

re-arranging
and
re-packaging
the components

they
herded
crowds
into the showers

pulled
them
out
gassed

hosed
them
to get rid of
the crap

hooked
the slippery bodies
with
thongs around the wrists

and
piled
them

into
the
elevators

for
the
ovens.