

Mama

by Tim G. Young

There were ten thousand photographs buried in the bottom of the jar
The jar was large but did not look quite so big
Mama kept everything she ever put her hands on
There were items in the cellar that nobody would ever mention
The cold of the winter and heat of the summer were also in the jar
Mama sang Happy Birthday to all the neighborhood kids in Yiddish
She ran a second hand shop where many of the photos originated
The kids on the block did not know what to think of Mama
Thousands of photographs boiled and burned one night while mama was away
She never found out until she took a turn for the worse
Her sons and daughters lived across the country and were unaware of her pain
Mama never used the telephone
Father had moved upstate with a twenty-one year old girl
One night he felt Mama's pain float through his bedroom window
He arrived in the city on the morning train
The sun fell hard on his head and eyes
It was difficult finding where Mama lived
All he had to go on were some photos
He had stolen these from Mama when he moved out of the house
Father was not laughing about forgetting his old address
He dropped several tears on the old photographs
Mama was in bed holding tightly on to a large jar
There were some dogs outside barking in the parking lot
She never heard them

