and refugee must address the systemic oppressions they encounter in their daily lives.

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References


JERI KROLL

What It Means After 80 Years

What do you think of when you can’t think? What memories taunt when you can’t remember?

You recognize each physical ache in that well-thumbed body. Nerves almost welcome the pulse like phone calls from friends.

Dependable pain swells the air. You hear the thunder, know what comes after.

But the past is a shooting star. Is that an afterglow out in space or did that planetary mist always cloud the dome?

Better to stay home where the mind’s propped up. A photo, a lamp, a glass figurine—flint against which you can light. For minutes, the truth of a life gleams.

Relaxing as a holiday, this physical world. You remember you should know what it means.

This poem first appeared in *Midday Horizon: First Choice of Australian Poets*: 2 Sidney: Round Table Press, 1996

Jeri Kroll has published books of poetry and fiction, as well as children’s picture books and novels for young adults. She is the Associate Professor of English at Finders University, South Australia, where she heads the creative writing program.