

LYN LIFSHIN

**The Woman Who Wanted to Show Not the Evils of the Holocaust,
the Striped Suits, Shaved Heads, Skeletal Faces**

Yaffa Eliach shows the murdered
towns people skating, skiing,
laughing biking so
they wouldn't die twice.
shot and buried in a bloody

ditch in one day, then forgotten.
She checked the National Archives,
found only two photographs
to add to the hundred her
grandparents hid in litter boxes,

boxes buried under bricks. So she
took a loan against life insurance
In Israel she helped a man dig up
his pictures, buried more than
40 years ago in corroded

olive tins. In Poland, a couple
handed her a shopping list:
television, jogging suits, Reeboks,
in exchange for their set. In
Boston, while helping a woman at an

intersection she discovered halfway
across that she was from the same
village, too. In Canada, an old woman
refused to give Eliach her snap shots
until she apologized. The old woman

insisted that Eliach's mother had called
her child "ugly as a monkey" back in
1930. The photographs make those

thrown in the ditch individuals. She
found photo labs that could reproduce
pictures at all hours because relatives
wouldn't part with them even
for a night. Nothing could be
dropped from the photos. If a woman's
last pose showed her in the garden

holding a tree branch, that branch had
to be saved. In one photo of two young
women on a doorstep, sisters in law
both named Shoshana. with the same
last name, scrawled on the back.

"Shoshona with Shoshana Do you
recognize us?" The day most of the
town was slaughtered, the gunman
told a Jew they'd let him and his
wife live. Then he barked, "Shoshana."

Both women jumped up, naked from
the edge of the grave. The man
had to choose. He chose his wife.
They shot his sister. Later the
man and wife died too. 52

years later, the two Shoshanas
lean toward each other lovingly.

Lyn Lifshin's most recent book, Before the Light, was published this year by Black Sparrow Press, who also published her book Cold Comfort in 1997. Other recent books include Blue Tattoo and Marilyn Monroe. She has edited four anthologies of women's writing, including Tangled Vines, Ariadne's Thread, and Lips Unsealed. Her web site, www.lynlifshin.com, has selections from some of her 100 plus books, interviews, prose, and photographs.