Spark by Hannah Senesh

Translated from the Hungarian & edited by

Thomas Ország-Land (July 2017)

Hannah Senesh, 1921-1944, (Hungarian spelling Hanna Szenes), poet, farmer, soldier, emigrated as a youth to Palestine to escape rising Fascism in Europe, and eventually joined the

British Army there. She was parachuted into partisan-held territory in Croatia from where she trekked to her native Hungary with a mission to rescue downed Allied aircrews and assist the Zionist resistance to the mass murder of Jews. She was betrayed, imprisoned, tortured and murdered. She is revered today as a war hero; and her songs, mostly about love, faith and nature, are sung the world over.

The following poem was its author's final testament.

SPARK

1

A spark burns out when she ignites a flame.

She is fulfilled in a flame igniting a blaze.

I would give all for a blaze to light up the hearts,

to light up the world, to raise a hope for life.

2

My cell: just seven steps by two. I can even tell

how long my life will last: two days at the least.

I won't be 23 in July. I knew the risks.

The stakes were high. I played for life. I lost.