

Some thoughts inspired by my great grandmother's photograph. H. Gordon



Her eyes transfix me. Where had I seen them before? An elderly face, yet reflected in the eyes is a youthful, eternal beauty. Her eyes are alive and dance with her soul - infused joyful energy; which I've noticed in the eyes of many life-loving people. This face is alive and it glows. Is there an expression of anticipation too? What is going to happen next? Will it be fun? I interpret this as if she is saying.

"Well, what do you think? What will you do about it then?"

In these eyes I see mischievousness from past times; eyes which remembered all the fun and joy of youth and held onto those memories for the sake of the onlooker to see and enjoy too.

I see laughing, even teasing eyes saying,

"Yes, I have experienced good and not so good in life and I am thankful for all the happiness".

Maybe I see these things because of my relationship with this woman. After all I am her namesake. Could there be such a connection, I don't know but I feel it. I've definitely seen those eyes before! Other people may pass by this photo without regard to detail. Another onlooker may dismiss it as just an old face, an old woman; no affinity, no depth of understanding not wanting to know more about her. A woman who once lived, suffered, bore a child; became mother to her sister's orphans and happily escaped pogroms in darker times. She wasn't alone. She escaped to England with her family in the early twentieth century.

Her face doesn't seem to show the bitterness or anguish she must have experienced.

I see, love, sympathy, kindness. I see a knowing-ness in her eyes and a strength to endure with love.

As I continue to gaze into her face I see a world within it. I gaze deeper and deeper into the confines of her very being. I find myself gradually merging with her thoughts, words and deeds.

Out of the soft sepia an angelic presence shines out to all onlookers.

Maybe I could describe in detail the clothes of this old lady in the 1920's but that would tell me very little about the person. I see an old lady but there isn't a grey hair on her head or a wrinkle on her brow. She's old because the photo is old and the clothes are old fashioned, from a time well before the 1920's. She may have been in her 40's.

I return again and again to this photo; the eyes always draw me in. Where have I seen those eyes before?

My mother was very close to her grandmother and she told me how she was full of fun and told jokes to her grandchildren; not always appropriate ones! A forward thinking woman perhaps?

I wonder if I see the fun in her eyes because of what I've been told and I'm searching for some recognition? This could be true now I suppose, having had the photo for many years.

I found an old photo of myself recently and shuddered when I looked at the expression in my eyes!

I think I know where I have seen those eyes before.