

Gypsies

People with nowhere left to go;
reviled, hated, persecuted.
Romanies, migrants from India,
roaming, fleeing, travelling, always on the move.
Six million: two words that still draw our breath,
A figure that's become a metaphor for
man's utter depravity, his inhumanity to man.
But who remembers the half million gypsies
who endured the same concentration camps,
suffered the same medical experimentation,
underwent the same forcible sterilisation programme
As did the Jews?

"Cursed is the land from which gypsies flee,"
runs an old Serb proverb to remind us how things are.
We mustn't forget. *Zakhor*. Remember.

O God, help us to be more tolerant of gypsies;
to cherish their culture and learn from their way of life.
Save us from stereotyping, stigmatising, scapegoating them.
Open our eyes to see this travelling, wandering race
as indeed the people of God.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who himself had no fixed abode, and who with
you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*I had some gypsy friends as a boy and I loved running and playing with them and then sitting
by their caravan, with a fire burning, rustic charms and clothes pegs being made, and
listening to their lore. I've had a soft spot and some concern for them ever since.*