

Veronika Pasa As A Child



My daughter Veronika Gaspar was six in this picture, it was her last year in the kindergarten in Gyulafehervar. I only entered her there at the age of five because she only spoke Romanian, she wasn't willing to speak Hungarian. I talked to her in Hungarian and she answered me in Romanian. After she came home from the kindergarten, she used to translate the Hungarian poems to Romanian. She was the 'sun-ray' in the final festivity in the kindergarten. She came home saying: 'Mom, I'm the "Snow covers the landscape".' 'What are you?' 'The "snow covers the landscape"!' The poem started with these words, the kindergartner taught them this way. This picture was taken in 1954, in the yard of the kindergarten. She had a golden dress, and we sewed some golden papers on it. The neighbor, my namesake Aniko Laszlo made it.

In Gyulafehervar there was a well-known Jewish lady doctor, everyone told us we should go to her. She found out that my daughter's organism couldn't assimilate anything. She ate her meal, but we found it unaltered in the chamber pot. Her name was Iren Salamon. I went to her and told her my problem. She began treating my child, and I have to thank her for my daughter's life. She told me that if we stayed some more in Borpatak, my daughter would have been most certainly dead. I would have probably found her one morning asleep, because of the weakness. If there was anything, she [my daughter] got measles, then mumps, and all kinds of diseases, she got on her bike and came to us immediately. As soon as I called her on thye phone, she came there at once. Very quick, very quick. She was a spinster who graduated Sorbonne. She wasn't deported. [Editor's note: Gyulafehervar remained under Romanian authority during World War II.] She lived in her own house, in a private house [together with her parents]. It was a big house, but I was only in the

consulting room, the bathroom and the waiting room. They weren't poor, after all she graduated Sorbonne. You had to have money to pay for it. She was at least twenty years older than me. One time, when we turned onto the street where she lived, my daughter began screaming because she knew she would get an injection. She called her inside, into the consulting room, leaving me outside. I only found out later why. 'Let's fool mummy. We'll tell them you didn't get an injection today. Don't cry, don't say anything, we'll fool mummy.' And I was expecting my daughter to scream even louder. But it was a dead silence. 'We fooled mummy' - they said with one voice. And from that day she found out the injection wasn't painful. And from that moment on she never screamed again. So she was an incredibly intelligent, cultivated lady.

My daughter was quite big when I heard Iren Salamon was going to get married. My daughter heard that, because while she was out playing she heard this: 'What do you mean? But the lady is old! How come she's getting married?' And she moved to Kolozsvár, to her husband. Her husband was Jewish, as well. She [the lady doctor] died here in Kolozsvár. She was very nice, incredibly nice. Each year, on New Year's Eve we used to send her a greeting card, and one time we received a letter in which she wrote we were her only patients who remembered her. She was very excited by this. And asked us what did she do to deserve this? And we answered that nothing more than our child's wife. She was an incredibly nice lady. Later I visited her in Kolozsvár, she was living opposite to the New York hotel, on the second floor, in an old house that had an elevator. My daughter was four or five years old, and she has never seen an elevator before, but we prepared her. I knew she was living upstairs, so her father told her: 'You get in the closet, push a button and it takes you up.' 'And if I get in any closet and push a button?' 'You can do that, but it will take you nowhere.' She wanted to go up and down [with the elevator].