

Minister's Introduction

We have come together to celebrate the life of a beloved friend, and to express our deep gratitude for the privilege of having shared our lives with her. Mariam Kelley changed us. She changed us by demonstrating an extraordinary consistency and humility by invisibly serving the Gods; she changed us by her unrelenting gratitude for whatever befell her, no matter how difficult to bear. We have become imperceptibly, permanently different – we now look more attentively and affectionately at our friends, so as not to miss the profound and mystical lessons that lie hidden within.

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Let us stand for a few moments and honor Mariam with our silent presence.

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The body has returned to ash, and we can finally see Mariam's life as a whole. We can see its accomplishments, the things her hand touched: family and friendships nourished, moments rounded by her little attentions. But ultimately her life cannot be measured by any external facts or accomplishments. At death, it is clear that only the great, central, internal accomplishment – the accumulated moments of presence – can have true significance.

“When C Influence enters our lives, we are given the task to live forever.♥” The particulars of our days; the efforts we take upon ourselves; the people we touch and who touch us; these are not who we are. These are the elements of a play given to us that we may become immortal. Mariam has now completed her play, and in every real sense she completed it perfectly as she said herself. She is able to say now, *"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do^Ω."*

As Mariam returns unencumbered to the source, let us remember that we share the same passage. We follow, and are even now following, in her footsteps.

Ava Maria Schubert (Elizabeth Kent and Larissa)

Sonnet 30 (Catherine Lambert)

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

♥ Robert Burton

Ω *John 17:4*

Eulogy (Susan Luccini)

It was my privilege to come to know Mariam Kelley by hearing the story of her life and laughing and crying with her as she recounted the ups and downs of her existence. About six months ago, she telephoned me and asked if I could visit her and record her last wishes. Today's ceremony reproduces as best as possible what Mariam wanted.

When we think about the course of any person's life, certain characteristics repeatedly come to the fore. So it is for Mariam Kelley. One of these was her concern and striving for fairness, which may have come from one of her own early experiences. Mariam was from Iowa. Her father was a doctor and so was her step-dad. When she spoke to her step-father about becoming a doctor herself, he said, "What kind of medicine?" "Surgery," she responded. "Mariam, nobody will give you a residency in surgery because you're a woman." "That's not fair, she replied." Throughout all the time that I knew her, fairness remained important to her. She continued to defend the weak, the underdogs, the misunderstood, and she was hard on those whom she felt were acting unfairly or hypocritically towards others.

C-influence had Mariam arrive at Apollo in a rather unusual way. Her son had built a house in Cambridge Circle, which she was unable to sell. Rather than rent it, she moved here. She joined the Fellowship and became one of the original founders of what was then called the William Blake School, later renamed the Lewis Carroll School. She served on the Board both in those early days and again more recently, bringing her abundant common sense, her support of students and teachers and her very positive outlook to Board meetings. She unfailingly supported the school's fundraisers. In fact, the last public event that she attended was the Lewis Carroll dinner on December 19th.

Having trained as a remedial reading specialist, she applied what she had learned to teaching at Lewis Carroll where she combined her joyful and loving support of the children and her own fondness for reading to achieve some remarkable results. Until her eyesight began to fail recently, her dining room table and her living room were filled with books, magazines and newspapers. She regularly attended meetings at Jane Horton's house to read and discuss works by authors as diverse as Shakespeare, the Anonymous English Monk, Dante. Mariam played the piano and enjoyed music, especially Chopin. She often attended concerts and student performances at the Prytaneion.

Another of Mariam's outstanding qualities was her generosity and her ability to think of others. It was not unusual for her to loan money to students or find work for them to do in or around her home.

Mariam loved and embraced life. During her long illness and decline, she never complained. In the last months of her life, she went to Southern California twice to visit an old friend. She was as tickled as a school girl at the prospect of being courted at the age of eighty-one. In a poem that she liked, "Abou ben Adam" by Leigh Hunt, there is this line: "I pray thee write me as one who loves his fellow men."

Mariam didn't have an intellectual relationship to the Work. She had a devotion to Robert and a commitment to follow his lead. In her book, she said, "I've always felt that there was somebody watching over me. There's no question about that. I didn't do it myself." About a year ago, she said to me, "I keep hearing rumors. Is the School in difficulty?" When I told her that I felt we had never been stronger or healthier, she said, "Great! That's good."

I like to think that Mariam chose the time and manner of her passing. As you may know, her heart stopped beating for a full minute two days before she died. But she revived and went on to share her joy and love with friends who visited on the last afternoon of her life. One of them reported that she said, "Lift up your head. Lift up your head," a few times as she was lifting up her own head. They all stood there with their heads up and backs straight. She was sitting up in the bed unsupported with her back straight. Several of those visiting remembered Elizabeth I and how she kept standing up during her final moments, keeping herself awake. That final moment for Mariam came at 9:00 on January 1st, a new beginning.

I feel privileged to have been Mariam's friend and confidant. Her direct and clear-sighted way of living her life are an inspiration to me and to her many friends. This, as Shakespeare said, is a gift she had: simple, simple. In closing I'd like to say, "Thanks for the memory, Mariam."

Chopin C# Minor Nocturne (Francis Noll)

Whitman (Susan Salisbury)

Through me shall the words be said to make death exhilarating,
Give me your tone therefore O death, that I may accord with it,
Give me yourself, for I see that you belong to me now above all, and
are folded inseparably together, you love and death are,
Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I was calling life,
For now it is convey'd to me that you are the purports essential,
That you hide in these shifting forms of life, for reasons, and that
they are mainly for you,
That you beyond them come forth to remain, the real reality,
That you will perhaps dissipate this entire show of appearance,
That may-be you are what it is all for, but it does not last so very long,
But you will last very long.

Minister's Conclusion

Ibn Arabi says, "*Do not spend the numbered breaths which have been given to you without purpose. Every action must be for a divine purpose.*"

The death of the body is the narrow gate to a higher world, through which nothing mortal can pass. The sequence of events that comprise one's life come to an end and the *purpose* of those events – the very reason we were born – is revealed: the silent ascension of an immortal soul.

*I am not afraid of death.
Death will be eternal union with my Beloved.
I know this.*

*Above, beyond all the union I know on this earth.
I am confident of this.
Death will be my bridge.*

Mariam's gratitude, consistency and humility – and the presence that she nursed forth from them -- are an example to us. To follow her example is our finest testament to her. Dearest Mariam, we thank thee.

There will be a toast to Mariam here, at the Pytenaion, after the internment at the Cemetery. For those who wish to remain here, please allow the members who will accompany Mariam to depart first.

Let us now accompany Mariam to the cemetery.

At the Cemetery: Minister's Introduction

We are here today in this beautiful cemetery on this glorious January day to release Mariam, by returning her ashes to the earth.

Reading: Psalm 23 (Emily)

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my adversaries.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Richard Thiel is given the urn to place in the ground.

Minister's Conclusion

From Rilke:

*Is it not true that, in the end,
there maybe no need for anyone to lay my funeral pyre,
since I myself have touched the torch of ecstasy to my unblemished heart,
that it may consume utterly itself and flare up in a single flame to God?*

Here, the earth returns to the earth and the divine spark returns to its divine source. In Rabia's words, "Love comes from eternity, and goes into eternity". The circle is complete.

Rose petals are offered for those leaving procession.