

# Clare Bowen

---

Funeral Service

**Saturday, October 17, 2008**

## **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. Clare Bowen changed us. She changed us by demonstrating an extraordinary consistency and humility in serving the Gods; she changed us by her unrelenting gratitude for whatever befell her, no matter how difficult to bear. And because we learned from her consistency and her humility and her consistent gratitude, 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.



Let us stand for a few moments and honor Clare with our prolonged presence.



## **Eulogy**

Ever positive, smiling and sweet, happy to see whoever approached her. Unassuming, gentle, in awe of her teacher, the school, and the continually unfolding work occurring. Inconspicuous, unpretentious, youthful. Consistent, reliable, integrity in all things. Robert, her teacher once said she had goodhouseholder in essence. Graylin, who worked closely with her often, felt she exercised her strength through love. And John, her husband describes her as “always grateful”.

Clare Herbert Bradford Bowen was born in Los Angeles on August 14, 1927 of Yale-educated Swedish parents. She was raised in a refined and musically-oriented environment, as her mother was a professional classical singer. After college Clare married. Twenty-five years later she found

herself in the process of a divorce while raising 4 children – Patti, Bob, Mike, and Sally, each 2 years apart, ranging from 17 to 11. To adjust to this sudden change in her life, a friend suggested she take some yoga classes. So she did – and to her good luck the teacher was Jan Allen, a student in the Fellowship of Friends! Jan gave Clare a workbook soon after they met. In December, 1971 Clare and her daughter, Patti joined the school.

Clare opened her home in Vallejo to Fellowship meetings and activities and Robert was a frequent visitor to her home. After a few years she sold her home and moved to Oroville with her youngest daughter, Sally, to be closer to the “ranch”, now called Apollo. She came to the ranch as often as possible and stayed in a tent or in the old barn that we used to have on the property. Within a short time she was able to buy a small trailer and move here. Clare was very happy to be part of this stimulating and friendly environment and was anxious to do what she could to help create a community of friends trying to civilize and make productive the land, while bringing presence to their lives. She willingly served with joy and pure devotion, preferring indoor activities to the more rugged outdoor jobs. Among the things she did were – Seamstress, she actually helped make the blue velvet curtains that we see here in the prytanaen; - Kitchen help, she spent a lot of time cutting and chopping vegetables each day; - Gate house attendant in the mornings for a few years; - and for over 30 years on a weekly basis she served the teacher directly, caring for his wardrobe.

In 1980 she married John Bowen and they lived in the trailer until John built their home. Years later while they were traveling in Greece, a fire burnt the house to the ground. Though a large shock for them, it became an opportunity to make greater efforts. They accepted their losses and rebuilt their home. Clare enjoyed her home and preferred it to going out, though she did enjoy having friends come for dinners. With a little encouragement from John she traveled to Europe, China, Mexico and Egypt. She enjoyed those trips very much and saw her trip to Egypt as a “mystical experience”.

Robert and Clare were close friends throughout the 36 years. He mentioned to some students that people teach in different ways and that Clare Bowen was an example of someone who taught with her being and her humility. She never gave an angle in a meeting. As her mind and health began to decline, Clare received firm support from her husband, her children, her friends, and Robert, helping her to be active as much as possible, as long as possible. John would consistently bring her to the Galleria kitchen to sit and

visit while he attended the meetings or helped in the kitchen. Olga, Alfred and the entire kitchen staff were very supportive with this endeavor. Various students would care for her so that John could have some time for householder or for himself. So many wonderful friends gave of their time and energy to be with Clare at this time. Robert said that C Influence gave her everything she needed and then closed the door.

Clare died on October 12 at 6:12 AM. She was a Fellowship student for 36 years and was the 6<sup>th</sup> longest surviving student at the time of her death. I would like to encourage those who are personally unacquainted with this remarkable woman to seek out those who knew her, to continue to learn from her. Robert's comment at her death –“From the very beginning to her last breath, she was always faithful to C Influence and to our school.

May we honor and thank  
Our Dear Clare.

The body has returned to ash, and we can finally see Clare'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. Clare has now

---

• Robert Burton

completed her play, and in every real sense she completed it perfectly; she is able to say now, "*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*."<sup>a</sup>

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

## **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.*

---

<sup>a</sup> *John 17:4*

Clare'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 Clare, we thank thee.

Let us now accompany Clare's family to the cemetery.

## **At the Cemetery: Minister's Introduction**

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

In the book of Job it says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: the LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

**Reading:** by Robert George

### **Hafiz**

How should  
Those who know of God  
Meet and part?  
The way an old musician  
Greets his beloved  
Instrument  
And will take special care,  
As a great artist always does,  
To enhance the final note  
Of each

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.