

FUNERAL SERVICE

FOR

GENEVIEVE WILLIAMS

(1928 - 2004)

Funeral Service for Genevieve Williams

Minister (Linda Tulisso): Introduction

In loving presence, we gather today to honor and celebrate our dear friend Genevieve, and to thank her for having shared the poetry of her life and the beauty of her work with so many of us.

Always, we will remember her blessed role and, now, we wish to tenderly release her.

Her passing, like that of other dear friends, serves as a reminder that the Gods have bestowed upon us *this* lifetime to embrace and use well so that our precious selves may emerge. Genevieve was a member of the Fellowship for 31 years. All of her efforts towards self-remembering created a permanent tendency in her to evolve. She got what she came for.

Let us stand for a moment of silent presence.

Omar Khayyam wrote:

Come fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The winter garment of repentance fling:
The bird of time has but a little way to fly
And lo! The bird is on the wing

Eulogy: (Julia Poulain)

Dearest Genevieve:

You asked of us that we speak of our sacred work for your eulogy, instead of speaking of you. Thank you for such a gift.

I hope, I know you will forgive me, if in choosing a line of thought, I turn to you, to your beautiful work and your beautiful being as my source of inspiration.

It is a privilege that, as we progress in the Work, greater demands are made of us. In the process of meeting these demands, we witness the miraculous changes occurring within ourselves. We become more sincere with ourselves. We acknowledge the initial resistance, the fears, the fear of the unknown, the judgments, and the lies. Gradually, we take them, and us, less seriously, and thankfully they come to occupy less space.

Such changes, however satisfying, are not enough. For, as our Teacher reminds us, this is only moving from one corner of a room to another, from one room to the next, when our goal is to leave the house.

Whatever the nature of the demands placed upon us, the real demands are those that we, ourselves, place upon our inner work. Working with each other, transformation becomes our daily bread. We soften. Understanding and compassion gently unfold their wings. We watch in wonder as we learn the beauty of conscious love. Conscious love becomes the golden thread linking one simple moment, to the next, to the next.

Thus, the present exerts a greater hold on us. We come to see that the moment remains the same; only circumstances change. We rest in the knowledge that everything has been carefully orchestrated by the Gods.

Dear Genevieve, I wish to read to you a poem that we discovered together as a friend read it to us and that we both cherish.

From The Book of Psalms (8th –3rd Century B.C.E)

Blessed are the man and the woman
Who have grown beyond their greed

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And have put an end to their hatred
And no longer nourish illusions.

But they delight in the way things are
And keep their hearts open, day and night.

They are like trees planted near flowing rivers,
Which bear fruit when they are ready.

Their leaves will not fall or wither.
Everything they do will succeed.

Dearest Genevieve, we thank thee.

Musical Interlude: Carolien Van Straten and Motoshi Kosako

Reading: Andrew Smith

Reading: by Hafiz (Robert's wish)

Heart, have you heard the news!
The Spring has come back—have you heard!
With little green shoot and little pink bud, and the
Little new-hatched bird,
And the Rose—yes! yes! the Rose—
Nightingale, have you heard the news!
The Rose has come back and the green and the blue,
And everything is as new as the dew—
New nightingale, new rose.

HAFIZ, remember well how short is Spring,
And drain the good days deep ere they depart,
Thou nightingale that shall forever sing,
Rose of thine own imperishable art!

Brothers, attend
How you shall spend
This fleeting treasure
Of days that pass:
Fill you your measure
With present pleasure,
The deep sweet glass,
And love and leisure,
And sunny grass.

Hafiz, trans. Le Gallienne

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Genevieve's Quote: Read by Virginia Emerson

What we need most and what is hardest to come by is to visit the Work in depth. Quotes help to take us to that place together. Yet the quotes lack the powerful, personal element that we would get if we had formed these thoughts in our own words, words that we still find hard to say to one another.

Why is it so difficult for us to speak deeply with one another, when it is truly our own souls that seek such nourishing encouragement?

So the days go by, and seldom do we have these more meaningful interchanges with one another. Is it because we are not allowed to? Or is it that it is too difficult? Or is it because we are simply too lazy?

When the time appears to be running out, it becomes a more painful experience to trample these opportunities of communicating so deeply, opportunities so rich in possibilities for each of us, both the giver and the receiver alike. When there is no more speaking, then these are the important things we would say to one another. You could call it attempts to grow closer to God, or at least, attempts to allow God to grow closer to you.

Musical Interlude: Suzan Willoughby

Minister (Linda Tulisso): Introduce John Graham to Read

John will share with us these words from Genevieve's nephew, David:

Look at the joy she gave to so many.
The ability to love one another as we are.
To share with one another whatever is needed.
To appreciate the finer things that God and man have given us.
The confidence to face what comes tomorrow,
And the certainty of its purpose.
This and much more she will leave with us forever.

Minister (Linda Tulisso): Close

In Psalms 90 it is written:

We spend our years as a tale *that is told*.
The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten;
and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years,
yet *is* their strength labor and sorrow;
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
So teach *us* to number our days,
that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom

Although Genevieve is no longer with us on Earth, her influence continues. Her years of hard work and devotion to creating the standard of beauty throughout our School will long be felt in our heart of hearts. May her love of the work remind us to seek the highest

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within ourselves as we each strive to use the time we have left to seek that vital yet elusive thread of self-remembering that connects us, moment to moment, to the immortal Gods.

[Minister, family members, Gunther (with ashes) and participants depart Prytaneion for cemetery.]

Michael Rolfer:

Please remain seated or standing. You are invited to attend the internment, which will take place at the Apollo Cemetery.

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Minister (LT): Internment

Reading: Genesis 2:7

And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

[David places the urn in the ground; Zoe sprinkles a handful of rose petals over the urn and holds basket for family to do the same.]

Reading: Ecclesiastes 12:7

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Musical Interlude: Yael (Lark Ascending) Hopefully

Minister (LT): Conclusion

Reading: Last Invocation from Walt Whitman

At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful, fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks—from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,
Set open the doors, O Soul!

Tenderly! Be not impatient!
(Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh!
Strong is your hold, O love.)

Let us go now, in presence, so that we may continue to honor our dear friend and celebrate the gift of life that the Gods have yet allotted to each of us.