

Ceremony for Denise Franzoso

Minister Julian Branston opens

Welcome, family and friends, to this blessed spot.

Few words can express why we gather here. Denise was a dear, sweet, kind person and we're here to come to terms with her loss. But how we do that is all important. Higher Forces lead us to the greater good, but always on their terms. Always on their terms. And so, while we let go of Denise in a human way, we also let go of her to where Higher Forces leads. By doing this, Higher Forces touch each of us more deeply. Which they must. They must, so that our verifications, our understanding, our childlike essence, can overcome the sting of death. 'Be ahead of all parting,' Rilke writes, knowing that to Be ahead, one must Be - now. We flow on from the past, containing all that the past offers; as honey contains the sting of a bee. So there are few words for why we are here.

In remembering Denise and remembering ourselves, let us stand for a moment of silence.

The Lamb, William Blake, read by Judith Grace

(a poem sent from Robert to Denise)

Little Lamb who made thee

Dost thou know who made thee

Gave thee life & bid thee feed.

By the stream & o'er the mead;

Gave thee clothing of delight,

Softest clothing wooly bright;

Gave thee such a tender voice,

Making all the vales rejoice!

Little Lamb who made thee

Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,

Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by thy name,

For he calls himself a Lamb:

He is meek & he is mild,

He became a little child:

I a child & thou a lamb,

We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

Chopin flute piece, Marta Fraternali and Susan Schofield

Eulogy for Denise, from the Minister

Denise joined the School in the year 2000 when she was 19. She joined after finding Robert's *Self-Remembering* among her father Mauro's books, and she later thanked her father for giving her life, not once but twice. 'Thank-you for this opportunity to be reborn,' she wrote.

Denise dedicated her whole life to the School; it was everything for her. Her efforts were many, consistent, pure. It was her aim to follow Influence C. 'I am very happy because Influence C gave me this opportunity,' she said. She helped open a teaching house in Rome, an infant daughter at her side. She took care of the residents, cooking wonderful meals, always having fresh flowers available. She spent time in other centers supporting them. She lived and worked at Apollo, helping with many octaves in her sweet, determined way.

There were many difficult times in her brief life; but she understood that this is the battle. She suffered a great deal, yet always tried to remember C Influence's hand in it. In that, she is our perfect guide. Her sweet essence shining through. Sweet, simple, and strong. In the state of essence, understanding goes more deeply.

Her father Mauro and mother Gabrielle stayed with her in Rome for the last three months of her illness. How she responded to her illness profoundly affected them, affected many. Our Teacher daily sent messages to her. Mauro said that the way she worked with her suffering was very special. She gave her life towards a great aim. He witnessed her work with suffering; how her soul began to emerge.

A little while after she joined the school, she sent Mauro a little story. She was lying in the grass, and looking around, she said, 'I feel part of the earth, the flowers.' Then she saw the birds in the sky, and said, 'I feel part of their flight. It means that it's possible to fly, to become spirit.'

Yes. It's possible to fly, to become spirit. In remembering Denise and cherishing her example, Rilke guides us with these thoughts:

'Be ahead of all parting, as though it were already behind you.

Here, in the realm of decline, among momentary days,
Be the crystal cup that shatters even as it rings.

Be and yet know the great void where all things begin
so that, this once, you may give it your perfect assent.'

Dear Denise, we thank thee.

Minister

The earth returns to the earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, as we look toward eternal life.

Urn is lowered.

Minister gives rose petals to immediate family.

The rose is the handmaid of love. A rose is perfect in every moment of its existence.

Family places rose petals into the grave.

By placing rose petals in the grave, we mark the triumph of love.

Rest of the funeral gathering place rose petals into the grave.

Minister's Conclusion

A divine flame returns to its divine source. The circle of life is complete. We part, so that we may meet again.

Let us withdraw to the gazebo for a toast to our beloved Denise.

Toast given by Michael Golding

Whatever challenges the Gods placed on Denise's path, her warm, wise Being always rose to meet them. Her play is a testament to the fact that it is not length of life that truly matters, but the depth to which we live it. So let us toast to Denise's courage – and grace – and to our love for her, which will continue to flower in our hearts.