

Alice Jean Kyes

November 24, 1935 – June 17, 2023

Minister: Guy

August 26, 2023



[Music: “Adagio,” by Albinoni
(Musician: Rustam, flute)

[Minister’s Introduction]

Welcome friends.

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Alice Jean Kyes.

We are here to bear witness to the mortal woman who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of her name, and to the immortal soul which has transcended that role.

The teacher has said, “Everyone who has died in the school has had a very successful life.” Alice Jean succeeded in meeting conscious influence and maintaining that connection for the rest of her life, so that after twenty-five years in the school she could say, “There are so many ideas for us in this work. So many. But the key to them all is transformation, transforming it all, to wake up.”

Let us stand and remember Alice Jean in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you.

The physical body is designed to produce presence and being, and then to be laid aside. Walt Whitman said, “The best of me then, when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly striving.” Alice Jean has taken with her the presence that she gained in this lifetime, and her connection with Influence C. Our teacher said, “That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough.”

[Reading: From “Little Gidding,” by T.S. Eliot]
(Reader: Jean)

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always--
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

[Eulogy: Richard]

When most of us think of Alice Jean, we see her at the Lewis Carroll Pre-school, inside helping the children with their projects and games or watching over them as they napped. Outside, she would be close to the sandbox or the swings, looking after her charges. Alice Jean enjoyed children, and the children returned her affection.

Alice Jean was born on November 24, 1935, in a small town in Nebraska, the third daughter in her family. Her parents owned a general store where, she said, they sold the best ice cream. Alice Jean was especially fond of her father. Throughout her later years, even as she succumbed to dementia, she kept a photo of him by her bedside and sometimes confided to visitors that she had dreamt of him.

She married and had four children. Upon joining the Fellowship of Friends in Portland, Oregon, on May 16, 1981, she left her family behind. She remained in Portland until 1985 when she moved to Apollo for a few months. Subsequently, she supported centers in Sacramento and Berkeley before returning to Apollo in 1995.

There she began working at the Lewis Carroll Pre-school. At first, she lived in the bedroom of the original building. When children were dropped off early, before 7:00, they knew that they could snuggle up in her bed until the school day began.

She respected the Montessori Method and was very supportive of the Lewis Carroll School program, but she preferred the relaxed setting of the afternoon program. As she was the director of that program, it was her domain. Many who knew her then used the same words to describe her: the most reliable person.

She was frank with people. You didn't go to Alice Jean to be flattered or to have your opinions confirmed. She preferred intelligent conversation to chitchat.

She was meticulous at maintaining herself and her surroundings. She was particular about almost everything. She enjoyed pretty clothes in bright colors, which were always perfectly ironed. At school, she would comb the grounds and walkways for sticks and debris and would spend time squatting down to pull out weeds. She enjoyed gardening. In fact, that is what she was doing when she fell and hit her head.

She taught many children to ride a bicycle. She regularly taught them songs from the *Wee Sing* series of books. The sand box was an important part of her afternoon

program. She maintained it and insisted on children respecting the materials and one another—or they were out! As one student said, “Alice Jean had a knack for keeping order.” She set this example through her direct and polite manner.

She read daily to the youngest children at rest time. It was not unusual to find a child in her lap or beside her reading and talking. She knew how much the youngest children enjoyed tiny things so she would buy little animals or cars and keep them in a small box or in her pocket as a surprise for them.

She preferred speaking to the children one on one in a more adult way, giving them more credit for their intellect and emotions than most adults would. The children knew this and respected her.

In our small community, she knew the family dynamics of each child. She was a reliable, consistent element in the lives of many children and their parents. Indeed, many parents would come to her for advice on parenting and other matters.

For many years, Alice Jean also offered her time and energy to the Apollo Library and to the Galleria.

She kept notes about her personal life, preferring to write in pencil at her very neat writing table. She had very good penmanship. She often wrote down quotes and put them around her house to read. About her day, she said, “I get up at four, eat breakfast, and spend two hours reading and writing what I want to remember from the workbooks. I don’t have people, I don’t travel, I don’t have a lot of possessions. It is ideas that are most meaningful to me.”

Before Alice Jean was hospitalized, she lived in a little cottage on Bo’s property, a place that suited her to a T. Her apartment had a hedge around a small patio, and, for some reason, its leaves kept turning brown. She meticulously gathered all the dead leaves daily and put them in a bag. Every day, she would also clean the leaves from the cars in the parking lot and, with the tiny rake she had, she gathered the blossoms that fell from the silk trees.

After her fall, she was taken to Rideout Hospital, and she had to be flown by helicopter from there to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. She loved talking about that ride.

Subsequently she started losing her memory, and in November 2018, she entered a nursing home, where she remained until she passed away on June 17, 2023.

Before her memory deteriorated, she often went to breakfast with Robert and took a photo with him. Then she started not understanding what he was talking about and did not want to go. But she did have a good connection to him and the school.

In response to the question of what she had found most meaningful after a lifetime in the Work, she said, “The transformation of suffering is the number one thing. It is honest. It is so essential to everything.”

[Music: “Cantabile,” from Concerto No. 3 by Vivaldi]
(Musician: Rustam, flute)

[Minister's Conclusion:]

The death of a friend reminds us of the fragile and temporary nature of our lives, and increases our love and gratitude for one another.

May Alice Jean's respect for and love of small children help us to cherish our own essence;

May her reliability and consistency help us to serve to the best of our ability; and

May her honesty inspire us to be true to our own selves.

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of Alice Jean Kyes is complete, and the soul that played the role is released to continue its divine journey.

Dear Alice Jean, we thank thee.

Please stand.

[Minister:]

We return Alice Jean's ashes to the ground: from earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Words fade in the face of a great reality. We, too, arrive at this simplest of moments—our friend, Alice Jean, showing us the way.

[Rodney and Janet come forward and lift the bowl of ashes.]

[Minister:]

Please join us for the ceremony of dispersing the ashes in silence.

[Ashes are dispersed.]

[Music: Pachelbel's "Canon"]

(Musician: Rustam, flute)

[Minister leads participants to the column. Constance scatters rose petals. Glasses are distributed for the toast.]

[Toast: Janet]

Alice Jean chose a quotation for her funeral, which gives us a beautiful way to see death, and life. The quotation is from Robert: "Endings are but beginnings for conscious souls." May this tribute today for Alice Jean bring us all closer to the inner light of our soul.