

Edith Singh

November 12, 1942 – July 5, 2023

Minister: Gail

September 30, 2023



[Music:

(Musician: Rustam, flute, and Moshe, kanun)

[Minister's Introduction]

Good afternoon, welcome friends, and a welcome to Edith's brother, Reiner and his wife Elke who will be watching us from Germany.

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Edith Singh.

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." Edith worked with physical disabilities for more than twenty-five years, while retaining her valuation for her teacher and her school, and finding pleasure in being present to the small moments of her life.

Let us stand and remember Edith 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 preparing." Edith 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: “The Swan” by Rainer Maria Rilke]
(Reader: Kathleen Stavosky)

Der Schwan

Diese Mühsal, durch noch Ungetanes
schwer und wie gebunden hinzugehen,
gleicht dem ungeschaffenen Gang des Schwanes.

Und das Sterben, dieses Nichtmehrfassen
jenes Grunds, auf dem wir täglich stehen,
seinem ängstlichen Sich-Niederlassen -:

in die Wasser, die ihn sanft empfangen
und die sich, wie glücklich und vergangen,
unter ihm zurückziehen, Flut um Flut;
während er unendlich still und sicher
immer mündiger und königlicher
und gelassener zu ziehn geruht.

The Swan

This labor through which the still unborn must pass
Bound and heavily weighed down,
Is like the awkward walking of the swan.
And death, where we no longer comprehend
The very ground upon which we daily stand
Is like her anxious letting herself go,
Into the water, soft against her breast,
Which now how easily flows behind her
In a wake of waves.
While she, infinitely silent, glides on
In her majestic way.

[Eulogy: David]

Edith was born in 1942 on the island of Sylt in northern Germany. She has one brother, Reiner, who currently lives with his wife Elke in Germany, and who kindly provided details of Edith's early life.

When Edith was seven years old, the family immigrated to America and settled in New Jersey, in the town of South Orange. Edith and her brother attended the local school and quickly learned English in their first year.

When she completed high school, she moved to Detroit to study journalism. After receiving her degree, she went on a journey through Europe. For a while she stayed in Madrid, where she worked as an English teacher. Edith was an adventurous person who loved to travel, visiting Egypt and India as well as European countries. She particularly loved Indian culture and decorated her home with Indian impressions. She had a library of Indian films and liked to lend them to her friends.

In 1973 Edith joined the Fellowship in the Bay Area. Five years later she moved to Germany, helping to open the first center in Munich, and later supporting the Frankfurt Center. A friend who knew her in that period recalls, "She felt like a real student to me. Some people you just feel are more present, working when you are around them, and she was one of those. "

While touring in Europe again she met her future husband, Tony Singh, who had traveled there from India. They married in Denmark and in 1983 moved to San Francisco. There Edith began working as a legal secretary for a large law firm on California Street, where over time more than 20 other students would work.

Here Edith received an unusual shock. A mass shooting at the firm in 1993 killed nine people and injured six more. Edith was able to escape unhurt to another floor of the building. One year later the law firm dissolved, and Edith moved to Apollo.

Her marriage had ended amicably, and she was free to settle permanently at Apollo. She bought property on which she put a mobile home. Soon, however, her life changed dramatically, as she suffered a stroke that left her with persistent speech and walking problems.

Although she never fully recovered, she was resilient and would bounce back from each setback. Edith had a very good sense of humor; she loved animals and always had at least two cats at home. She was generous and helpful to others. On several occasions she adopted cats when her friends were no longer able to keep them. A friend remembers, "She had an infectious laugh, and made an effort, even though

she had trouble walking and speaking, to come to the Apollo Bazaar. Whenever you met her, she was really present.”

In 2008 she regained her strength sufficiently to fulfill a long-held desire to visit Prague, where she met her brother Reiner and his wife. They spent two wonderful weeks together, as she later recalled.

In May of this year further health difficulties led to her entering a nursing home in Grass Valley. On July 5th she passed away at the age of 81, having spent 50 years in the school.

Edith loved living at Apollo. She moved here and stayed here; she was loyal and steady in her relation to the school and the teacher. She was well aware that being present was the most important aspect of her daily life.

“Transformation of her situation is what I felt about Edith,” a friend recalls. “She was an example of just taking what came; that would be an essential thing to remember about her. It didn’t look as though she was suffering, just trying to ‘make the best of what we cannot remedy,’ as Queen Elizabeth said.”

What was remarkable in her final years was her simplicity of essence and deep acceptance of her play, without resentment, finding contentment in her daily life.

[**Music:** JS Bach Partita for flute solo, first movement]

(**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 Edith's steadfast valuation for presence, for her Teacher, for the School and for her friends enlarge our own valuation;

May her ability to find contentment in the simple moments of life bring us closer to essence presence; and

May her uncomplaining acceptance of her play hearten us when we face our own difficulties.

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

Dear Edith, we thank thee.

Please stand.

[Minister leads participants to the gravesite.]

[Minister:]

We return Edith'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, Edith, showing us how.

[Minister signals to the pallbearer, Carmina, who moves to the grave and places the urn.]

Let us join in raising a glass to Edith, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the life that has been given to each of us.

[Participants move to the table for the toast.]

[Toast: David W.)

“Let us toast to Edith's example of living your life bravely and contentedly.”