

A MEMORIAL SERVICE

for

IOLA MOORE

July 8, 1973

Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

Raleigh, North Carolina

Introductory Music

Franck: *Symphony in D Minor*, second and third movements.

THE SERVICE

(There is to be a short pause between the introductory music and the service proper. The beginning of the service can be indicated by the person in charge taking his place. Paul Bredenberg has been asked to read this service.)

*We come to speak a common grief,
We come to tell a common sorrow,
For we are human.*

*Supremely beautiful upon the reeling earth
Arose the fragile palace of a human life,
Made of memories inwrought with memories,
Rising as on a summer day a summer cloud,
Radiant with the light of hope,
Eager for the splendor of living,
And we, beholding it, rejoiced,
Tomorrow will not find it.
Even today it is not.
Blessed are beautiful memories.
And blessed are they that remember the beautiful.
Even though they mourn,
Blessed are they that remember.*

(from *A Modern Requiem*
by Edmund Gale Jewett)

Recollection of Iola Moore by the reader

Blessed are we indeed as we reflect on IOLA's life, as we celebrate the miracle of her life, as we listen to some of the words and music she loved and wanted to share with us. For in her life we were privileged to witness something rare on this earth.

However it was done, nature produced in her a rare example of human kind. If there was in her any hate, malice, guile--any of the dark, harmful, useless emotions--then they were so miniscule in her makeup as to escape one's notice altogether. Perhaps, long ago, through some prolonged ordeal, she was cleansed? I do not know. But if there were a fountain where we could wash so clean would we not rush there today to bathe in it?

She loved beauty, she reflected beauty, she was herself supremely beautiful. It seemed that nothing beautiful escaped her notice, except that, like all the non-human creatures of nature she loved so well, she was so far as one could see quite unaware of her own beauty. And this made her lovelier still to us who knew her.

She seemed to have an inexhaustible loving curiosity that extended to all things and beings, a wanting to know what things were, and where, how, why..., constantly expecting to confront another phenomenal beauty and goodness in them. This feeling for things is visible in her love for a poem which she asked us to save for her, and I think it would have pleased her to share it with us today. It was written by Reuben Tam, an artist who has a summer home at Monhegan, Maine, where Iola spent summer vacations for many years.

Wait for high tide at noon.

*The sea claims this bank of sand then.
The ledge blackens and slides under
In a slow tilt of crowns and spangles.
Down in the littoral fields
Shocks of light shake the deep kelp
And swords flash.
Farness rides in on windrows
Strewing thunders and diatoms
In the coils of the whelk.*

*The tide comes in.
It takes rockweed and sand bar.
It bends the crimped line of land.*

Why is the wind so dry?

*Land is one side, sea is darkness,
And sky is an orb.
The waves sweep wide
Over a scatter of bones and hollows
Of the seared and the spent,
Over the shards of the misbegotten.*

We have walked this light before.

*In the tremble of new edges
You see the desperate starts and revisions
And the flashing,
As untried phyla of creatures
In scintillant inches of leap
Flip over,
To die
From one look at the sky.*

I shall remember best of all her interest in the night sky, her feeling for the heavenly bodies there. Years ago we observed together, in approaching twilight, the appearance of the crescent moon subtending both Venus and Jupiter in close conjunction. It was a brilliant, symmetrical array of the three bodies, and I have seen nothing since that time that has come close to matching it. For Iola, it was an experience of pure, profound delight.

And there was the constellation of Orion which we observed a number of times as it rose in the eastern sky. This marvelous grouping of stars was for her a special pleasure to behold, and I felt that, especially as her power of sight gradually failed, she wanted me to keep track of Orion for her and to report on its whereabouts.

There was the time also that she expressed the wish to know how far toward the south the setting sun progressed at the time of the winter solstice. In late December of that year I drew a pencil line across the railing on the west side of our house to mark the position for her. The object of her interest on this occasion seemed in a way a very little fact indeed, and yet when noted with her love and wonder it seemed to assume a fresh and unexpected significance.

The mark I drew for her has long since faded. But the mark she left for me on sun and moon, on planets and stars and much besides, is indelible. There was this infectiousness about her. And a kind of transformative power that worked in her upon us. The things we talked of with her, the things we observed and loved together, will never again be seen just as we saw them before, but we will see them always in some degree with her, in her, through her vision. They will be vibrant for us with a special meaning deriving from her mediation. To speak of her spirit living henceforth in us is not a mere fancy. There may well be a mystery here, but there is solid fact as well. I say again, what perhaps I do not fully understand, that she reflected beauty upon us.

*Your Monhegan, Iola, I have never seen
But I shall never see a rocky shore
Or barren cliff falling to the sea
Without the feeling that your spirit
There behind my eyes sees yet again
And rejoices with me.*

I want to speak also of Iola's faith--her faith in me, her faith in us--and her love. She believed in us, in our capacities and in our goodness. There was perhaps something childlike in her trust, and yet pure innocence could not survive such a full lifetime of experience in a mind of such intelligence as hers. And so we responded, and we continue to respond, to her judgment of us, her confidence.

What a wonderful dynamics is here! It is as if we saw something of ourselves reflected in her, as if we found a self--or power to create a self--which might

never have been just what it was if she had not been there, as if in her we served and refreshed ourselves. We found in her a sustaining, reinforcing power, as if we were infected by her belief that we can do what should be done, that we can in however humble ways triumph in our lives. We find in her a renewal of our faith, our energy, our power. We are able to see more clearly, feel more intensely, work more productively, because our awareness of what is beautiful has been enhanced and our love of what is good has been fortified.

And so, Iola taught us and inspired us, loved us, believed in us, and continues to sustain us and to work through us in our world. This is perhaps the only kind of tribute to which she would have aspired, and the only immortality.

I want to close these recollections with two brief passages of writing that seem to me particularly luminous when we think of Iola. The first is from Loren Eiseley's *The Immense Journey*:

"...it finally comes to me that this is the most enormous extension of vision of which life is capable: the projection of itself into other lives. This is the lonely, magnificent power of humanity. It is, far more than any spatial adventure, the supreme epitome of the reaching out."

The other passage is from Kawabata's *Snow Country*:

"The labor into which a heart has poured its whole love--where will it have its say, to excite and inspire, and when?"

I have spoken of Iola in a limited and personal way, and I know that each of you knew her in other ways that I was not privileged to experience. As we listen next to a piece of music for which she had a special fondness let us each in his own way continue to recollect the treasured images of her life.

Ravel: *Pavane for a Dead Princess*

*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place
In all generations,
Before the mountains were brought forth,*

Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
 Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
 Thou turnest man to destruction;
 And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as
 yesterday when it is past,
 And as a watch in the night.
 Thou carriest them away as with a flood;
 They are as a sleep:
 In the morning they are like grass which groweth up;
 In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up;
 In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
 Thou has set our iniquities before thee,
 Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
 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 four score
 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.

O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
 That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
 Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
 And thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be
 upon us:
 And establish thou the work of our hands upon us
 Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

(Psalm XC)

Wagner: *Parsifal*, Prelude (a four-minute passage, ending on a long note; when
 it has started, the reader will read the next two readings during the
 music.)

It may be so with us, that in the dark,
 When we have done with time and wander space,
 Some meeting of the blind may strike a spark,
 And to death's empty mansion give a grace.
 It may be that the loosened soul may find
 Some new delight of living without limbs,
 Bodiless joy of flesh-untrammelled mind,

Peace like a sky where starlike spirit swims.
 It may be that the million cells of sense,
 Loosed from their seventy years' adhesion, pass
 Each to some joy of changed experience,
 Weight in the earth or glory in the grass:
 It may be that we cease; we cannot tell.
 Even if we cease, life is a miracle.

(Life is a Miracle,
 by John Masefield)

That Power that guides the unfolding of the
 acorn and pushes up the oak, that Mind that
 brings the gorgeous butterfly out of the dull
 cocoon and raises it to its new and winged
 career, may well know how to "swallow up
 mortality with life" and bring us and ours
 to a higher stage of being. This new and
 greater miracle of another life beyond does
 not stagger us much after we have fully
 entered into the wonder of the spring.
 It is no more difficult to carry a soul
 safely over the bridge of death into the
 light and joy of a new world than it is to
 make a spring dandelion out of one of
 those strange, winged seeds which a child
 carelessly blew away last summer. But
 here is the dandelion. It is "common"
 enough. We hardly stop to look down into its
 yellow face or to meditate on the wonder of its
 arrival over the narrow bridge of that flying
 seed....

As far as we are able to discover, the soul
 possesses infinite capacity. A blossom may
 reach its perfection in a day, but no one has
 fathomed the possibilities of a human heart.
 Eternity is not too vast for a soul to grow in,
 if the soul wills to grow.

(by Rufus M. Jones)

O strong of heart, go where the road
 of ancient honour climbs,
 Bow not your craven shoulders
 Earth conquered gives the stars.

(by Boethius)

Darest Thou now, O Soul,
 Walk out with me toward the unknown region
 Where neither ground is for the feet nor any
 path to follow?
 No map there--
 Nor guide, no voice sounding nor touch of
 human hand.
 Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor
 eyes are in that land.
 I know it not, O soul
 Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us
 All waits undreamed of in that region, in
 that inaccessible land.
 Till, Till when the ties loosen.
 All but the ties eternal,
 Time and space, nor darkness, nor gravitation
 nor any bounds bounding us.
 Then, then we burst forth, we float
 In time and Space O Soul, prepared for them,--
 Equal, equipped at last.
 O joy! O fruit of all!
 Them to fulfill O soul.

(by Walt Whitman)

Anthem setting of *Darest Thou Now, O Soul?* by David McK. Williams, sung by
 the North Shore Unitarian Church (Manhasset, N. Y.) Choir. Knight Recording.

BENEDICTION

"From Life to Death!
 An eager breath,
 A battle for the true and good
 An agony upon the rood;
 A darkening of the light--
 And night!

"From Death to Life!
 A peace from strife;
 A voyage o'er an ocean wide
 That moves from shore to shore its tide,
 A passing of the night,
 And light!"

(by John Haynes Holmes)

(Music as the people leave)

Brahms: *First Symphony*, second and third movements.)