

With Love for Geneve: August 6, 1988 - August 18, 1995

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Note: The following talk was given by a kindergarten teacher for a child she knew well who died while in first grade.

The last time I saw Geneve was here in this hall. It was late June at an evening concert. She stood there, on the bench, poised and quietly watching the people, listening to the music, nestling in her arms the little flannel baby she had sewn so proudly in Kindergarten - like most of the children going on to first grade. The picture of her standing there remains with me - such a beautiful impression of childhood - the taking in of quiet wonder, the tender holding... amidst the turning of larger, noisier spheres.

Geneve graced our Kindergarten at Hawthorne Valley for three years - what a blessing for us all to have shared that time with her! Sunny and bright, fairy light, Geneve was so agile and graceful in her beautiful, upright being; the most amazing jump roper! - able to master skills quickly.

From the beginning, Geneve showed a social ease that was striking. I remember three years ago at the snack table - those big 6 1/2-year old boys were quite taken aback when this tiny nursery girl would happily unpack her snack beside them and begin her cheerful conversation. But, they were quickly won over. She held their interest with stories of her summer in the Arizona desert and speculations of travels to the moon.

Over the years, her social gifts strengthened. She made friends easily with all of the children and was able to communicate with unique clarity. Creative in play, generous with her love, kind and patient with the younger children, Geneve shared the skills of her nimble fingers and simple knowing in her sensible words with us all.

She brought many things to share with us. We wondered over the postcards of exotic corners of the world where her mother sometimes traveled. We tasted the sweet nectar of grapes from her yard which we pressed into juice. We all delighted in her sweet little baby bunnies who came to teach us their soft and gentle ways.

Geneve had a power of reasoning very strong for a child of her age. There lived within her an inner need to make sense of the world, and I would often overhear her logically working through issues of fairness, and musing over earth and heaven, angels and birth and death.

We spent these Kindergarten years dancing through the seasons, walking in wonder, learning the secrets of hidden worlds, singing to the flame of life.

One bread day last year, I got up from my chair to check on the loaves in the oven, and when I came back to the table - there was Geneve, sitting in my chair, an impish twinkle in her eye, smiling amidst the laughter as if to say, "Now it's my turn to be the teacher."

There are so MANY ways in which our children are our teachers.

The lessons come strongly. So beautifully did this little star-child shine! So radiant was her joy, complete in each moment, the memory of the brightness of her being lives on in us - a blessing... ever present and in all places.