

Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society
MEMORIAL SERVICE
October 30, 2009

ANITA WINCHESTER
February 14, 1940 – September 26, 2009

“Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Luke 12:27

PRELUDE¹

(In the spirit of peace, we invite you into silence and quiet reflection while we listen to the prelude.)

WELCOME & GREETINGS

Tracy Johnson, President of the Board of Trustees

Welcome! I am Tracy Johnson, President of this Society, and I have been asked by Rev. Lloyd to share this memorial with you in her absence today. We gather as family and friends to lovingly remember Anita Winchester this afternoon. To offer to one another our special memories and to honor a woman who has meant so much to each of us; a sacred time, a bittersweet time, a time to know peace.

CHALICE LIGHTING by D. H. Lawrence

When the ripe fruit falls
Its sweetness distills and trickles away
Into the veins of the earth.

When fulfilled people die
The essential oil of their experience enters
The veins of living space, and adds a glisten
To the atom, to the body of immortal chaos.

For space is alive
And it stirs like a swan
Whose feathers glisten
Silky with oil of distilled experience.

***HYMN #123 “Spirit of Life”**

*Spirit of Life, come unto me.
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.*

READING *"Camas Lilies"* by Lynn Unger

Mary Lohmann

Consider the lilies of the field,
the blue banks of camas
opening into acres of sky along the road.
Would the longing to lie down
and be washed by that beauty
abate if you knew their usefulness,
how the natives ground their bulbs for flour,
how the settlers' hogs uprooted them,
grunting in gleeful oblivion as the flowers fell?

And you — what of your rushed and useful life?
Imagine setting it all down — papers, plans, appointments, everything —
leaving only a note: "Gone to the fields to be lovely.
Be back when I'm through with blooming."

Even now, unneeded and uneaten,
the camas lilies gaze out above the grass
from their tender blue eyes.
Even in sleep your life will shine.
Make no mistake. Of course your work will always matter.

Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

SONG

Meredith & Helen Cowart

EULOGY The words of Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, spoken by Tracy Johnson, MUUS President

Though I only met Anita Winchester about a year ago, she left a lasting mark on me, as I am sure she did on many of you here.

Anita was many things to many of us. Her friend Pat Christgau describes Anita as one of the most generous persons she has ever known, especially in the gift of her time and presence to other people.¹ She gave willingly to friends of her life's spirit and presence.

Anita was part of our family here at MUUS. And, she valued that relationship as much as she did, because her own family had been split by religious differences. She recalled to me

¹ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

that in her family of origin’s religion, she was told that only believers would be saved. She didn’t believe it, and when she confronted her family minister challenging him on this assertion, he told her, “I agree with you, but don’t tell your father!” Nevertheless, such dogma caused deep wounds in the family that Anita never forgot.² It is the reason, I think, that she was so passionate about taking a bit of that evangelistic fervor and focusing it on this faith tradition that she would find, because of our non-creedal assertions, to be life-saving.

No surprise, Anita was drawn to teaching, having loved teaching “little kids” as she called them, when she was in high school. She went on to Harting (sp?) College in Arkansas, a fundamentalist Church of Christ college, studying to become a teacher. She dropped out in the 1960, a bit incensed that though she was an English major, she was not allowed to read *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Later she attended Memphis State, and the University of Tennessee in Nashville and Knoxville.³

More than many other things, Anita was a writer. She majored in English at the University of Tennessee, studied writing at The New School in New York City. She was, for her friend, Marsha Darrah, her favorite “unpublished author.”⁴

Yet, her writing was merely an expression of what lay more deeply inside. A profound respect for others, exhibited by her devotional intent to listen well to others. Friends and family have described her as the best listener they’ve known, totally focusing in on people when they were speaking,⁵ and providing a real presence to those fortunate enough to delve into the gentle art of conversation with her.

In “*MUUSINGS, A Celebration of Community Creativity*” (on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of MUUS), she wrote this haiku.

Haiku⁶

On the bridge over
The stream meandering down
I perch, listening.

² Source: Rev. Lloyd’s pastoral notes, 2009.

³ Source: Rev. Lloyd’s pastoral notes, 2009.

⁴ Source: Anita’s friend, Marsha.

⁵ Her friend, Marsha Darrah.

⁶ *MUUSINGS, A Celebration of Community Creativity* (Published by Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, P.O. Box 876, Woodbury, CT 06798, 2006), 48.

Chorus of small stream
On the rocks, among the moss
Two parts, harmony.

Greenly emerging
Leaf buds, skunk cabbage, ferns, moss
Living with dead leaves.

Sitting on this rock
Watching, listening for spring
My butt wants softness.

Pooled water finds
Opening slit in exposed root
Slides to water fall.

Through tree skeletons
A haze of golden leaf buds:
Early spring lessons.

From distant vantage
New moon sees past, to all I
Would be, if I would.

PAUSE

Her niece, Teresa Hockenberry, recalls of "Aunt Nita" . . .

"As a child, I remember my sister and I getting SO excited when Aunt Nita would come to Nashville each summer . . . Aunt Nita always made a point of taking my sister and I on special outings with no one else around - just the three of us. I always felt so important. There was a small creek with a bridge at my grandparents' house where we would take walks and she would ask us about our lives, what we liked, what we wanted to do, and what we thought of things. I remember being surprised that an adult would want to know what I was thinking. Not only did she want to know but she genuinely listened. She wouldn't let me get away with some standard answer that I thought she might like to here. She helped me learn to speak for myself.

I am named for her. We share a middle name - Louise. I am proud to share a bond of family, name, and blood with someone so courageous and strong. Watching her as she so gracefully and beautifully fought this disease . . . inspired me yet again. She [was] one of the most amazing women I have ever known . . . Though her physical body is gone and my heart aches at that absence, I know that a much bigger part of her will never leave because she lives in me."⁷

Her friend, Pat Christgau affirms that the love of her life was her husband, Jack Winchester. "[Earlier in their life together they lived in New York where they had an apartment on the West Side. They divided their time between their house in Vermont and their place in New York City. They loved Gilbert & Sullivan, exotic foods and cooking, with Anita developing a taste for sushi long before it was popular. They were interested in the theater and the arts. Anita was a member of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.]"⁸

She continues, "[at the time of Jack's death, her concern was as much for Jack's children as it was for herself. There is a picture of Jack and Anita, where she looks at him affectionately . . . She is beautiful, young, and blond. He was handsome. They were deeply in love.]"⁹

They were travelers, and Anita was especially fond of Greece. Greece had an influence on her and Jack's tastes in food - - - lemon soup and Lamb dishes. They had Greek wine in their cellar. It seems likely that it was Greek Mythology that sparked Anita's interest in The Goddess.¹⁰

True to her life-long principle of leaving this place better than she found it, Anita was involved in many local organizations, including Flanders Nature Center, the Organic Garden Coop, the Bethlehem Town Republican Committee, the Bethlehem Historical Museum, Swim Club and Boat House.¹¹

And, of course, her beloved MUUS. She was among the earlier members of MUUS, joining it on August 7, 1985. She researched and wrote the 10 year history of this congregation, completing it in 1990. It remains, to date, our only written history of the congregation. I know that, had she lived, she would have been a tremendous resource as we now try to

⁷ Source: Teresa Hockenberry, email 10/3/2009.

⁸ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

⁹ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

¹⁰ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

¹¹ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

gather up the remnants of our history from the remaining 19 years. Perhaps that is something we should be aiming for for our 30th anniversary?

Yes, as a member of MUUS, she has left her mark. In her time, she served on the Board, on the Committee on Ministry, helped establish an endowment in her late husband’s, Jack’s memory, and was a Trustee. She regularly offered her home in Bethlehem for Fourth of July Picnics and Annual Christmas gatherings.¹²

She was doggedly committed to helping the congregation complete the Welcoming Congregation workshops, and to ultimately helping this congregation incorporate into its bylaws this language in 2000¹³: *The Society shall not exclude any person, membership on the basis of race, national origin, color, gender, age, ability, or affectional or sexual orientation.*¹⁴

Leaning about as far away from her fundamental religious roots as she could, Anita called herself a witch. In her time, she led the UU course called “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven” more than once, being intimately drawn to the feminine divine that had been written out of history for so many centuries. She found the imagery and sacred stories about the Goddess to be empowering, and believed them to be creatively inspiring for both women and men.¹⁵ She collected iconic Goddess figures from many cultures and countries and was an active member of Circle of Gaia reading groups and Daughters of Demeter.^{16 17}

Personally, I, too, have been caught up in Anita’s generosity of spirit and spider’s web of invitation into this faith community. In many congregations, if that congregation is lucky, there is someone, often an elder person, who seeks the stranger out, and helps them feel at home. I remember at the Universalist Church of West Hartford, where my husband and I joined our first UU church together, it was Dotty Johnson. As visitors we thought it was an amazing coincidence that no matter where we sat, on each of those early visiting Sundays, Dotty was always sitting behind us, and at the end of each service, warmly extended a hand of greeting to us. We thought it purely a chance coincidence. Little did we know.

¹² Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

¹³ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

¹⁴ May 2006 By-Laws, Mattatuck UU Society, Woodbury, CT, 1.

¹⁵ Source: Rev. Lloyd’s pastoral notes, 2009.

¹⁶ Source: Notes from Pat Christgau (former MUUS member and friend of Anita), email 9/25/09.

¹⁷ Note: Greek mythology tells us that “Demeter, a goddess and queen, was the divine mistress of agriculture and growth. (ca. 440 BCE).”¹⁷ Her “Olympian world was a patriarchal one, governed by Zeus, ‘father of gods and men.’ But in her myth, Demeter successfully resists the arbitrary and tyrannical exercise of patriarchal power, circumscribes her own areas of potency and authority, and celebrates her affinity with other female divinities.” http://mkatz.web.wesleyan.edu/daughters_of_demeter/daughters_of_demeter.htm October 29, 2009.

At the Greenfield Church, it was Monica Sharp, wife of Waitstill Sharp who founded the UU Service Committee. She died last year in California. But, to this day, there are many people my age, who say, "I came (and more importantly stayed) because of Monica."

And, here at MUUS, probably among others, but remarkably unique in her own right, it was Anita Winchester. Her investment in spreading the saving good news of Unitarian Universalism, offering strangers a safe sanctuary in which to explore their spiritual life, was nothing less than a calling to Anita, from which she could neither ignore nor turn away. To this, she dedicated her life in later years, and because of her, there are now many in this congregation who found their spiritual home and sustaining center for their lives, here at MUUS. How lucky we were to have had her in our presence for so long. How lucky that our lives were touched by hers. How conveniently coincidental that she offered, week after week, her own brand of sustaining grace and hospitality to each of us.

During the 2007 Christmas/Holiday season, Anita shared with us this story of her holiday memories¹⁸:

She said,

"After Mary asked me to be part of this service, one of the first memories I dredged up, astoundingly, provided better understanding of my experience the Christmas of my 11th year, insight into my family relationships then and ever after, and revelation of a life that that helps me understand much of my adult approach to living and new beginnings. That theme has to do with time, watching time, waiting, taking time, using time, finding time, lost time . . .

Christmas, 1951. My mother had been in the hospital for 4 months – and would be for another 5 as she had a series of operations meant to arrest the tuberculosis that was destroying her lungs. My 10 year old sister and I were home with my father. Christmas morning we each had one small, wrapped gift - - - a Bulova lady's wristwatch. Not what we little girls wanted or could have remotely expected, but I guessed it was the best my distant and overwhelmed father could come up with on his own. I tried to be excited. My sister very soon wound hers too tight and made it inoperable. Now I realize that extraordinary gift, far too costly for my father at the time, was his attempt to give us something special, at a time when we needed more reassurance and love than he knew how to show.

¹⁸ Thoughts presented by Anita Winchester as one of four presenters at the 12/30/07 MUUS Sunday Service on Winter holiday memories.

And we were all marking time – waiting, until Mother could return to us.

My mother was bedridden from the time I was 7 until I was 14. Our Christmases were somber. But I set out to make them as bright and cheerful as I could, campaigning for a large pine tree, decorated as much as I could. As a teenager, I discovered the importance of mistletoe, hung in a ring above doorways to encourage a kiss for anyone passing under it. One of my special memories is of going into the woods with my father, he carrying his hunting rifle. He shot a large bunch of mistletoe from where it grew in a tall tree, so I could make a mistletoe ball and spread love and connection. This was a special time, shared with him.

[gray font – unspoken]

I’ve been known to scour Connecticut for mistletoe at Christmas, though it’s almost impossible to find, and costly, since it doesn’t grow here. It’s a parasite which grows in the top of Southern live oak trees. If you attended holiday potlucks at my house, perhaps you recall the fake stuff in a double ring, hanging in 2 strategic spots.

As the years have passed, my concept of Christmas has grown to include the importance of the Winter Solstice: an appreciation of the dark time, for being interior, for germinating – but also a time for watching the return of light, for appreciating the cycles, and ups and downs of a life.

It wasn’t until adulthood that New Year’s Eve parties became important – an occasion for joyful celebration without expectations of idyllic family ties. My late husband, Jack, told me about the party stunt, from his British/Canadian days, of dressing the youngest attendee as Baby New Year – and as that person entered the front door, the oldest person, dressed as Grandfather Time, exited the back door. An enactment of “Out with the old, in with the new.” A shift from one time to another.

About 16 years ago, during this very Sunday between Christmas and New Year’s, I conducted an intergenerational Sunday service, and talked about the Roman god Janus – the god with two faces, he could look forward and backward at the same time. A friend in Maine even sent me his bust of Janus, for demonstration. Of course, even earlier, as is most often the case with gods, Janus was a “she” named Jana, later Juno, Mother of the January New Year.

I don’t make New Year’s resolutions anymore. But I do set aside quiet, solitary time, to look back at where I’ve been and to look forward, to where I want to go. To look at how I’m positioned now. Time to be grateful for my life in this place, at this time. And to feel

joy at love shared, wonder at the blessings of acceptance and support we give one another – that's a perfect celebration.

My mother lived to be 79. I still have the watch. Though the band has been replaced and it has been cleaned numerous times, it still keeps time.

And I do still watch time, not because I'm waiting, suspended in time until an important reunion. Now I watch time because there's so much I must do, and the time to do it gets shorter and shorter.

I suppose I do make one huge, continuing resolution: to engage in the here and now, as much as my body and its maintenance will let me. My current focus on time is NOW. To live and give as much as possible.

PAUSE

Conclusion

In my several conversations with Anita, particularly, this summer, when the end wasn't quite so certain, and when we were talking about that which brought meaning to her life, she reflected with gratitude on the many blessings she had been given during her life. She counted Jack, her family and friends, and her family here at MUUS, as the life-transforming riches of her life. And, the lesson learned from those blessings? "To pass it on to others. To make this place a better place than it was."¹⁹ She wanted to help people be the best they can be; she wanted to be a good teacher and parent.²⁰

She told me she particularly appreciated this quote from the poet, Mary Oliver:

"When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it is over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.

¹⁹ Source: Rev. Lloyd's pastoral notes, 2009.

²⁰ Source: Rev. Lloyd's pastoral notes, 2009.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world." ²¹

PAUSE

And, on the topic of death, she offers this haiku:

Death²²

Dare
Earth speak
about the end
to what I *know*?
Here and always?

Anita told me that we should fight for life - - - as long as we can enjoy it, and that we should make the most of the time we've got. As we talked about her own theology and religious beliefs she shared with me, that her favorite moments were when she would be laying down in the evening, her head on a pillow, the evening shadows dark. In those moments, there were those times, when she could feel herself part of the universe, seamlessly . . . it extending into her . . . she floating into the majesty and embrace of the larger universe. She believed that there is a mystery, a creative energy, that connects us, one to the other. It was a feeling that gave her great comfort.²³

I offer you these last words from Anita, in prose written about this autumn time of year.

Fall²⁴

That passion time,
When brilliant leaves drift gently down,
Like reluctant lovers parting, after the long,
Lingering goodbye kiss,
And the half-waved leave taking.

The time ahead will be cold and closed in,
Solitary without the erratic warmth and cooling
Of tentative parting.

²¹ <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/show/113317> October 29, 2009.

²² **MUUSINGS, A Celebration of Community Creativity** (Published by Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, P.O. Box 876, Woodbury, CT 06798, 2006), 17.

²³ Source: Rev. Lloyd's pastoral notes, 2009.

²⁴ **MUUSINGS, A Celebration of Community Creativity** (Published by Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, P.O. Box 876, Woodbury, CT 06798, 2006), 41.

Leaves falling, greens and golds
And crimsons of an abundant, persistent autumn.
So much color-a blaze too soon gone,
Leaving tree skeletons,
Sometimes holding a lingering parchment leaf,
A ghostly reminder of what was,
On a twig.

Floating and free-falling, a golden leaf,
Gaia's magic carpet, rises on a wave of wind.
A soul could rest on this leaf,
Hitch a ride on Nature's whirling observatory.
And discover, before landing, in a newly leafless tree
an exposed nest, abandoned after the summer's rearing
of sparrow or robin.

Suggesting where our true nesting and rearing have been, the real home
Found in a topsy-turvy life, not appreciated
Until no longer needed.

Do we, tossed, and sometimes lost in furious spring winds
Or pelleted with necessary summer rains,
Know the source of our succor, the haven of our health?

This fall, falling,
Means the transit to the other side of the circle,
The falling down of the soul, to pause and muse,
Before again ascending
The wheel of the year.

May it be so.

HYMN #6 *"Just as Long as I Have Breath"

*Just as long as I have breath, I must answer, "Yes," to life;
Though with pain I made my way, still with hope I meet each day.
If they ask what I did well, tell them I said, "Yes," to life.*

*Just as long as vision lasts, I must answer "Yes," to truth;
I dream and in my dark, always: that elusive spark.
If they ask what I did well, tell them I said, "Yes," to truth.*

*Just as long as my heart beats, I must answer, "Yes," to love;
Disappointment pierced me through, still I kept on loving you.
If they ask what I did best, tell them I said, "Yes," to love.*

REFLECTION

DAUGHTERS OF DEMETER
Fadwa Najamy & Friends

Tribute for Anita Winchester

This is as it is written from the Book of Shadows, Chapter Two verses fourteen from the year 1940.

The words tell us of She, She of Many Names, Never Forgotten One, Great Mother of Us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth and her daughter, a daughter full of grace and much favor. The words tell us that She of Many Names, sent forth a daughter Anita, named for her grace and favor, so that the women might some day remember.

For the season had come again when all will return to she, the Great Mother of us All, She of Many Names, She who brings forth the mountains and blows the winds that rippled the waters and lights the fires of spirits. She sent forth a daughter, who though short in stature stood tall and strong. And it is written that this daughter so graced and of much favor, remembered something deep within that spoke of the melodies, the rites, the dances and the wisdom.

And it is written that this Daughter traveled to many places that were sacred to She of Many Names, Never Forgotten One, Great Mother of Us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth; and there the daughter so full of grace and favor, found her calling. She had found the words, heard the melodies and remembered the steps of She of Many Names, Never Forgotten One, Great Mother of Us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth and all that lies in between.

And written further that this Daughter so full of Grace and favor found her home and gathered the women around who had forgotten. They had forgotten their rhythm, forgotten the dances and lost the melodies of their hearts. She, this Daughter so-full of grace and much favor, daughter of the Queen of Heaven and Earth, shared the words, taught the dances and let the melodies flow from her heart. And the women listened. And the women gathered. The women began to feel the melodies, remember the words and their feet danced the steps.

And the women gathered from far and wide and rejoiced. And they spoke of their newfound wisdom to more women who gathered to learn more. And, She the Daughter, who was full of grace and much favor, was happy for the 2 women sang, the women recited and the women danced- once again as they had done in the beginning. They gathered the wood and made the fires. The women kneaded the dough and once again made cakes for the Queen of Heaven and Earth. And She, She of Many Names, the Never Forgotten One, the Great Mother of us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth was glad of heart.

And it is written in the Book Shadows of She Of Many Names, Never Forgotten One, Great Mother of Us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth; It is written in chapter 9 verse 26 in the year 2009, The Queen of Heaven and Earth grew lonely and called her daughter home. For time moves on and the seasons change. Everything She touches changes and She changes all that She touches. The old must be renewed and the new must grow old. And the Daughter returned to She of Many Names, Never Forgotten One, Great Mother of Us All, Queen of Heaven and Earth. And all the land grew sad, as their hearts were heavy with grief.

And let it be said that the women will not forget. Their hearts retain the melodies, their minds remember the words and their feet know the steps. They share what they learned from the Daughter, She who was Full of Grace and much Favor. And in their hearts they are glad. For now they remember and the daughter's work is done.

~ Fadwa Najamy October 2009

Songs Sung by the Daughters of Demeter

*We all come from the Goddess
And to Her we shall return,
Like a drop of rain,
Flowing to the ocean.
(repeat 2x) author unknown.*

Lullaby

*Like a ship in the harbor,
Like a mother and child,
Like a light in the darkness,
I'll hold you awhile.
We'll rock on the waters,
I'll cradle you deep,
And hold you while angels,
Sing you to sleep.*

Chris Williamson

REMEMBRANCES BY FRIENDS

SILENCE

READING: “*Tao Te Ching*” by Stephen Mitchell

Rudy Bremser

Verse 64

What is rooted is easy to nourish.

What is recent is easy to correct.

What is brittle is easy to break.

What is small is easy to scatter.

Prevent trouble before it arises.

Put things in order before they exist.

The giant pine tree grows from a tiny sprout.

The journey of a thousand miles
starts from beneath your feet.

Rushing into action, you fail.

Trying to grasp things, you lose them.

Forcing a project to completion,
you ruin what was almost ripe.

Therefore the Master takes action

By letting things take their course.

He remains as calm

at the end as at the beginning.

He has nothing,

thus has nothing to lose.

What he desires is non-desire;

what he learns is to unlearn

He simply reminds people

of who they have always been.

He cares about nothing but the Tao.

Thus he can care for all things.

SAXOPHONE SOLO "I Did It My Way" by Paul Anka

Mike Ingber

*And now, the end is near,
And so I face the final curtain.
My friends, I'll say it clear;
I'll state my case of which I'm certain.*

*I've lived a life that's full -
I've travelled each and every highway.
And more, much more than this,
I did it my way.*

*Regrets? I've had a few,
But then again, too few to mention.
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption.*

*I planned each charted course -
Each careful step along the byway,
And more, much more than this,
I did it my way.*

*Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew,
When I bit off more than I could chew,
But through it all, when there was doubt,
I ate it up and spit it out.
I faced it all and I stood tall
And did it my way.*

*I've loved, I've laughed and cried,
I've had my fill - my share of losing.
But now, as tears subside,
I find it all so amusing.*

*To think I did all that,
And may I say, not in a shy way -
Oh no. Oh no, not me.
I did it my way.*

For what is a man? What has he got?

*If not himself - Then he has naught.
To say the things he truly feels
And not the words of one who kneels.
The record shows I took the blows
And did it my way.*

Yes, it was my way.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Tracy Johnson

Sacred source of all that is creative and good
We gather together to offer our remembrances
To offer our gratitude for the mark that Anita has left on each of our hearts
We give thanks for her passionate presence,
For her gentle teaching way,
For the grace and hospitality that were a part of all she took up
For the blessing of connection; one to another
We are grateful for the creative sparks and the confidence instilled
By Anita's loving touch,
So present in all the moments of her life.
We recall the sweetness of our times together
The experiences of joy and wonder
The powerful way in which she believed in what mattered to her.
We celebrate Anita's life, that which draws us here together in this moment
And we give thanks.

***HYMN #324 "Where My Free Spirit Onward Leads"**

*Where my free spirit onward leads, well, there shall be my way;
By my own light illumined I've journeyed night and day;
My age, a time worn cloak I wear as once I wore my youth,
I celebrate life's mystery; I celebrate death's truth.*

*My family is not confined to mother, mate, and child;
But it includes all creatures be they tame or be they wild;
My family upon this earth includes all living things on land,
Or in the ocean deep, or borne aloft on wings.*

*The ever spinning universe, well, there shall be my home;
I sing and spin within it as through this life I roam;
Eternity is hard to ken and harder still is this:
A human life when truly seen is briefer than a kiss.*

CLOSING WORDS from the Navajo - #682

Beauty is before me, and
Beauty behind me,
Above me and below me
Hovers the beautiful.
I am surrounded by it,
I am immersed in it.
In my youth, I am aware of it,
And, in old age,
I shall walk quietly the beautiful trail.
In beauty it is begun.
In beauty it is ended.

POSTLUDE *(Please remain seated for the postlude)*

**Please rise in body or spirit.*