

CWVWP: Parting Thoughts

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It is, they say, as hard for friends to meet as the morning and evening stars. Affixed in separate constellations, we await those rare occasions when, for an ephemeral moment, we align. In the summer of 2005, for several weeks, that alignment occurred. Magic is not too strong a word for the alchemy that occurs when strangers become friends.

Paul, like Goethe's *Sorcerer with novice Apprentices*, you conduct your conjurations and incantations not with a Broom but with a patient and even temper, a clicking laptop, and an enchanted guitar, and, under your adept wizardry, we test our powers.

Cara, your lovely name means *face*, and you wear all of yours with such grace: professor and mother, Miami *espíritu* and Massachusetts mind, all intellect and all heart.

Linda, you are a woman of smiling brown eyes and soulful laughter, the kind of amazing laughter that can come only from one who has known the tears but transcended the sorrow.

Carol, having finally found sisters, you embrace them, you invite them in--into your private pains and joys, into your big heart, into your cool and unquiet car on a hot June day.

Kathy, don't you know that the woman reflected in the glass, for us, will always be you: pretty face, young of heart, lyrical scientist, yo.

Once a twin, you became, on a sultry summer sojourn, a tattooed triplet to Thelma and Louise--do not be surprised by your eloquence, Lou; still waters run deep.

Beth Henry, Beth Henry, two names suit you; like the legends of old, a single name cannot contain one such as you; with wit and humor, you broke the ice; thank you for your bold heart and your leprechaun laughter.

Diane, with a moral compass, a Catholic conscience, and a candor that does not belie your gentle kindness, you made us think, and we will remember your remarkable stories.

Ruth, sunny and sincere, you are the kindergarten teacher we all wanted to have; your smile is an uncomplicated welcome and, in your eyes, we see the wondering children we once were.

Nichole with an “h”, porcelain fair and blue-eyed, you are as soft-spoken and modest as a lady in the Victorian literature of which you speak with such articulate and contagious admiration.

Kris, our adventurous, winged traveler firmly rooted in family, like Isak Dineson whose story begins, *I had a farm in Africa*, your screenplay shall start, *I almost died once on a crowded street on a dark night in Bahia...*

Krista, techno-guru who sets the cyber world right and tomboy girlfriend who could not shoot the deer, though it “sucks” not to have a job, we have faith that come some early September morning, your name will be on some lucky school’s roster; we each hope it is ours.

Genuine and guileless Danielle, how we admire your determination and openness; though intelligence and quiet confidence will take you far, we know your feet planted firmly in the mountains will bring you home again.

Amy, born of a long line of Birds, bred of strong stock and loving lineage, proud without being prideful, your stories are the threads that bind you to the past, a past you have shared so graciously with us.

The summer solstice has passed. Eclipses do not last long. Now other signals call us back to into comfortable orbits. Old and familiar elliptical routes measured in weeks and months demand our return. It is, they say, as hard for friends to meet as the morning and evening stars. What do they know? They must have no faith in the illuminating knowledge that comes with shared experience. I say that, over the passage of time, even on the most busied of days, even if I catch only the faintest glimpse of their light, the stars that I have seen once for the briefest hour are out there shining somewhere.