

**Celebrating the life
and lovingkindness of
Jannette Dorothy Kurak**





Grandma renamed all my pets! She named my hedgehog Rosie and my dog Lacy. She refused to call them by what I chose but believed every pet should be called by what it looks like. She said to me when I showed her a picture, "She looks like a Rosie," and then only called her that. I accepted it and thought it very endearing. Here are quotes I remember:

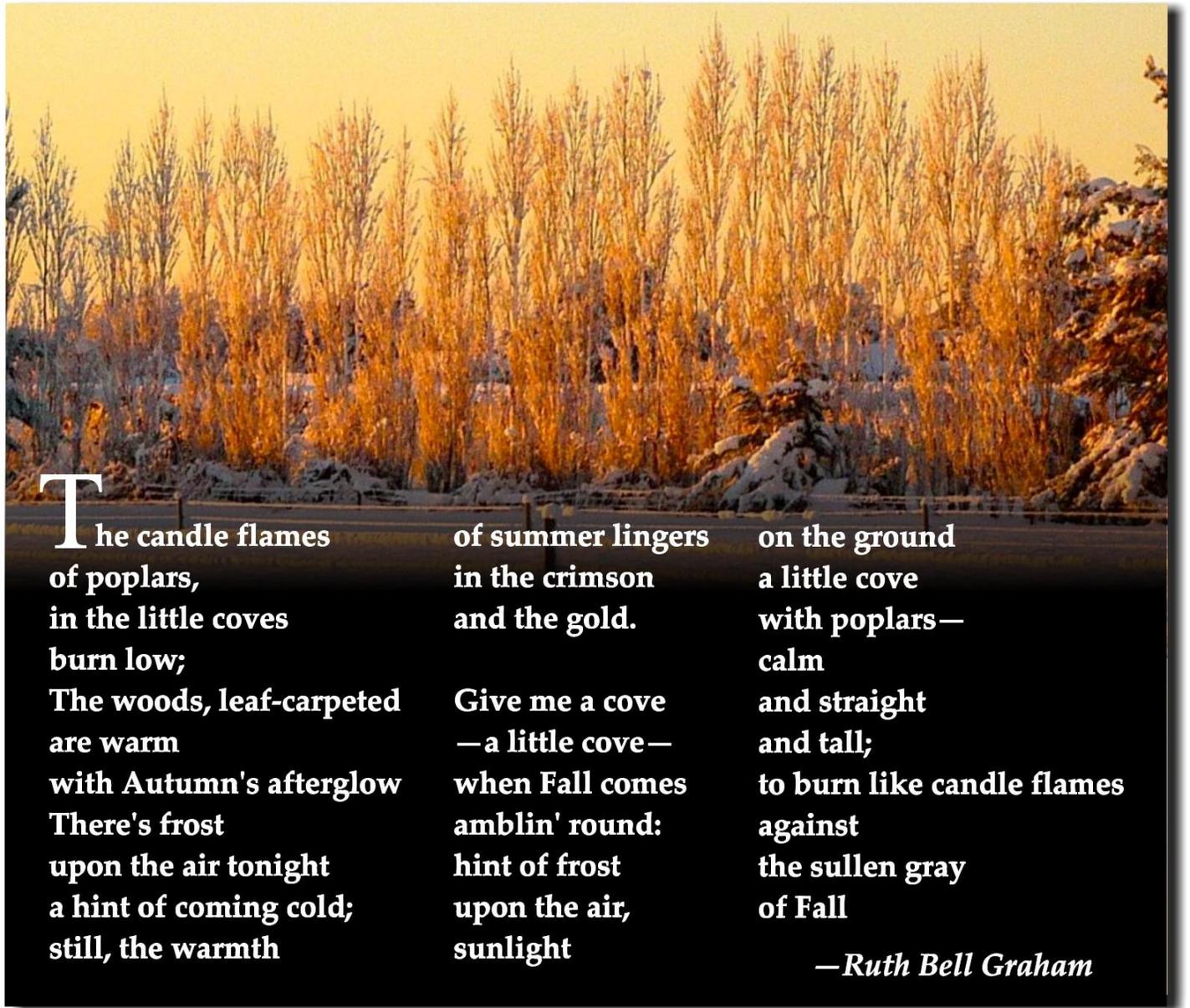
- "An albino squirrel visits me everyday"
- "I have a sword in my cane, do you want to see it?!"
- "I've been thinking about you."
- "Give the squirrels their privacy."
- "Grandma, there is cat hair in my food." Grandma says, "Well... I just swept and vacuumed."

- "You've gained weight."
- "I just found a cousin in Champaign, Illinois!"
- "Can you bring me back an alpaca hat from Peru, it's so warm and I just love it."
- "Here, I thought you would like these, I found them at the dollar store."

And when I think of Gram, I think of words like:

Strong, Unique, Hardworking, Strong-willed, Loving, Superstitious, Beautiful, Orphan, and Adventurer.

—Joshua



The candle flames
of poplars,
in the little coves
burn low;
The woods, leaf-carpeted
are warm
with Autumn's afterglow
There's frost
upon the air tonight
a hint of coming cold;
still, the warmth
of summer lingers
in the crimson
and the gold.
Give me a cove
—a little cove—
when Fall comes
amblin' round:
hint of frost
upon the air,
sunlight
on the ground
a little cove
with poplars—
calm
and straight
and tall;
to burn like candle flames
against
the sullen gray
of Fall
—*Ruth Bell Graham*

I remember all the things Mom planted in our yard—poplars, blue spruces, pines, rowan, russian olive, chinese elm, plum, apple, rhubarb, tulips and many, many more. Our yard was the arboretum of the neighborhood. My earliest memory was losing my pacifier in the dirt next to where she was gardening! She never lost her love of growing things. And most fragrant of all was the lilac, which I used to bring to her. She would put them in a vase on the table and the beautiful smell would fill the kitchen.

As the two youngest, Stuart and I grew up with her as a single parent, and she worked hard to make sure there was always enough

food for us hungry boys. She also wanted to marry again and provide us with another father-figure, but things never quite worked out the way she had hoped.

Another thing she did was make us work. I'll never forget the day she had a *huge* stack of 8 foot logs delivered. After she cut them up with a chain-saw she made us haul them to the back and split them with a maul. Heat for winter!

Thank you, Mom, for choosing to give me life. Your love has been a shining light that saw me through many dark days.

—*Robert*



The Cat & The Feather

When it comes to Gram I will not find it easy to put all my memories down. She was a generous and wonderful grandparent and has shaped my life significantly by giving me the joy of rediscovering the mysteries of Britain and the West. Biodh mi sona! I think it's safe to say she was always a haven to whoever came her way. She saved a cat and named it Angel after discovering its litter in her woodpile.

I recall one trip to MN that I made with my dad. We got in late but Wendy and Grandma Jan were still waiting for us with pizza and salad! I was wearing a green Robin Hood hat which Jan had given me long ago, but which

I'd now spiced up with a huge hawk feather to complement my obsessive research into Britain's oldest hero.

We were sitting around as a cozy group chatting when we became aware that Angel was perched on the cupboards overhead and eyeing my feathered cap! Gram said "You better not go near her! She wants the feather!"

Fortunately I escaped! Thank you Gram for letting the cat out of the bag on that one!

—Adele



A big package arrived from Gram when I was 10, and it was full of earrings - my first earrings!
—Ness



The Squirrel House

Mom asked me to build a new squirrel house because the old one was rotted out. I said no problem and would get to it later. Well, she grew tired of waiting for later and went behind my back and had my club brother Duece build one.

He did a good job but Mom decided to have me make some improvements to it like adding shingles to the roof and putting another access hole in the back wall. I did what she asked and put it up in the tree using my grandfather's 40 year old rickety ladder. It was not easy and I almost fell a few times off of the ladder.

She was pleased when it was done. The next day she called me and said I needed to come back over and make some changes. The new

access hole had to be covered with a flap because the squirrels would get cold with the wind blowing through. I also needed to add a small ladder to the front so they would have an easier time getting in.

I asked her why she couldn't have told me this when the squirrel house was on the ground and not 15 feet up in the tree? She shrugged her shoulders. I risked my life one more time with the old ladder and made the improvements according to her specific instructions.

She was very pleased and so was I.

—Stuart

When my Fall comes
I wonder—
will I feel
as I feel now,
glutted with happy memories,
content
to let them lie
like nuts
stored up against the coming cold?
Squirrels always gather—
so I'm told—
more than they will ever need;
and so have I.

Will the dry,
bitter smell of Fall,
the glory of the
dying leaves,

the last brave rose
against the wall
fill me with quiet ecstasy
as they do now?

Will my thoughts turn
without regret,
from blackened borders,
leafless trees,
to the warm comforts
winter brings
—of hearth fires,
books
and inner things—
and find them nicer yet?

—*Ruth Bell Graham*

I will always remember Mom as simply just ... loving. She seemed to always be there at the right time to comfort and support me when I needed it. She almost could read my mind at times when I couldn't find the words. She was never judgmental when I messed up. She never made me or others feel guilty about being human, a rare quality especially for mothers! She always had time for a hug, a result maybe of her lack of love growing up as she struggled to survive in foster homes.

This made her take extra steps so her children never felt unloved. Her love carried me through tough times and good ones. My mother was also brilliant in common sense and her brilliance showed in everything she did, whether it was applied in her job as an insurance underwriter or her paintings of

people. She was a great photographer and artist, and seemed to excel at anything she put her mind to. She could clean fish, deer hunt, ride a dirt bike, swing an ax and loved the outdoors and the animals both big and small that we shared the planet with.

As she grew older she wasn't shy about sharing her wisdom with anyone who would listen and to those that wouldn't. One thought that always makes me smile is she never ever came empty handed when she came to visit—she always had a gift in her hand ... Always! But it was the gift of her friendship that my sister, two brothers, her eleven grandchildren, in-laws, friends and myself will never be without. We all truly loved her.

—*Doug*



Almost always one of the first things that comes to mind in thinking about Grandma is how much she loved animals, and when she was a child living and working on farms one of her favorite animals was cows. I think she found them comforting.

You could never leave her house without something: food, towels, blanket, mittens, scarf, or survival items in case you broke down in a snow storm.

We called it Grandma gridlock when her boxes and keepsakes, laundry and miscellanea threatened to prevent free movement through her house.

She loved Perkins and Red Lobster. The last time I ate out with her we ate at Perkins and received free pancakes. We also ate at Red Lobster with my parents and Sandy and David in Duluth a couple years ago.

Almost every weekend we visited at her house, changed the kitty boxes, did special chores,

and spent time talking at her kitchen table. She always had something to share, an opinion to express, or something to vent about from her neighbors, to work, to politics, to advice on our personal lives.

Each Christmas since I was about 5 years old my mom and I would sleep over at her house and enjoy family dropping by and yummy food.

I also remember when Angel brought her kittens to the safety of her wood pile. Mom, Stu, and I had to take the entire wood pile apart for 3 kittens no bigger than my hand. My mom, grandma and I then took Angel and her kittens to the Humane Society. That day I met my future kitty Patchouli. I went back the next day and brought Patchouli home. I wouldn't have her if not for Grandma. Of course Grandma later went back and adopted Angel.

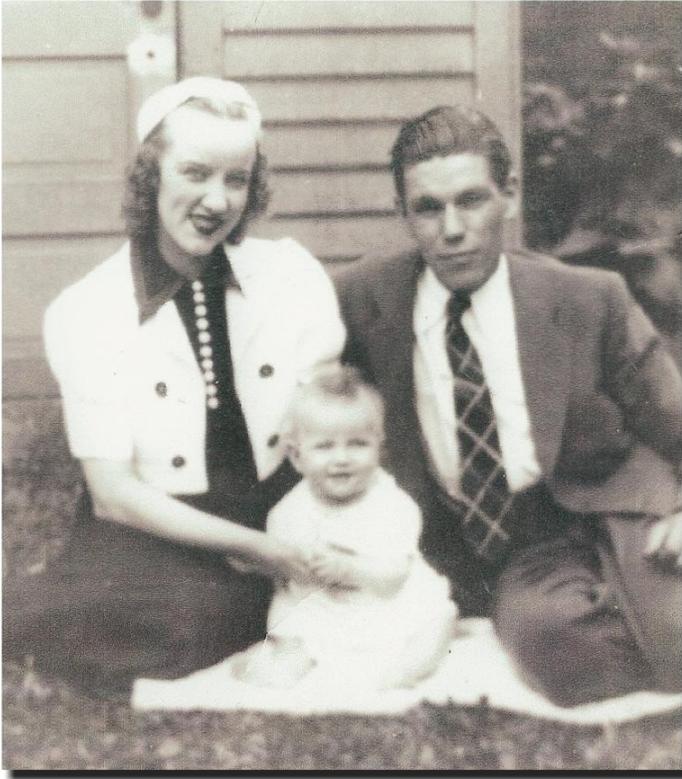
—*Hannah*



Oh, time! be slow!
it was a dawn ago
I was a child
dreaming of being grown;
a noon ago
I was
with children of my own;
and now
it's afternoon
—and late—
and they are grown
and gone.
Time, wait!

—*Ruth Bell Graham*





Jan, our Mom, was quite a spirited person. *Did you know?*

Mom originally wanted to become a missionary to Africa, and as a teenager went to see Billy Graham preach when he was at Northwestern Bible College in St. Paul in the early '50s.

Mom was studying Russian at the U of M during the height of the Cold War (1960-1961) much to the consternation of our dad over concern about being labeled communists.

When she was just a child she used to hop on the Duluth, Mesabi and Iron Range train with the conductor and ride the circuit through the Iron Range towns. Her Grandpa Caza was the Station Master in Virginia during the Depression.

Jan lived above the Virginia Train Depot with her grandparents, and told us stories of seeing the "Brownies" (house elves) in the Depot. She said they tried to entice her to go with them, but she wouldn't.

When her mother died when she was seven years old she wasn't allowed to go to the funeral, so she put on her mother Gloria's black velvet dress and paraded up and down in front of the church. Her grandparents weren't amused.

Much more recently, she was determined to go to the Renaissance Festival despite her inability to walk far. She rented a scooter and dragged me, Hannah and Alex to the fair. We had a great time. We will so miss her spirit, spunk and sense of excitement with life!

—Wendy



Jan was born December 9, 1936 in Virginia on Minnesota's Iron Range, and survived a tough childhood in the midst of the Great Depression, early loss of her mother, time in foster care on working farms, and a turbulent youth. These led her to create a warm home for her own children.

for animals. Her yard near the Mississippi flyway, has been a haven for flocks of ducks, woodpeckers, doves, songbirds, rabbits and squirrels, and she derived great joy in feeding and caring for them. Her strong spirit wanted to do so much more, but her heart and body gave out.



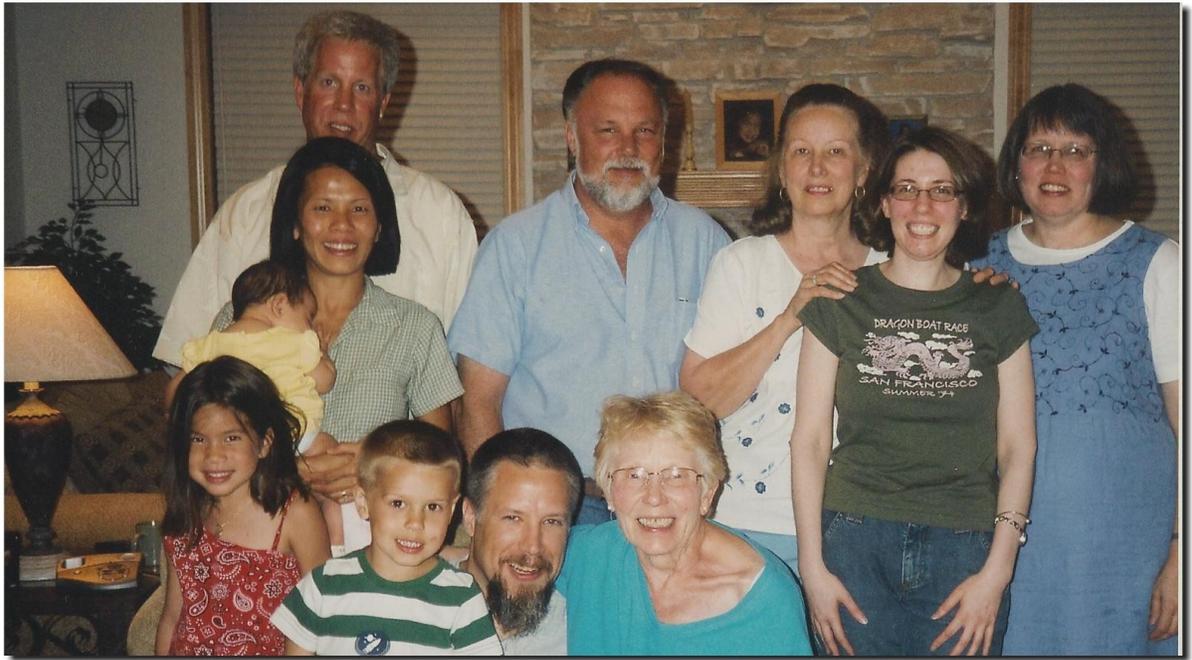
She was very curious and intelligent, always learning and trying new things throughout her life. Curiosity led her to reconnect the Angove family in Minnesota with the Angoves of Cornwall, England. She traveled and inspired her children to travel.

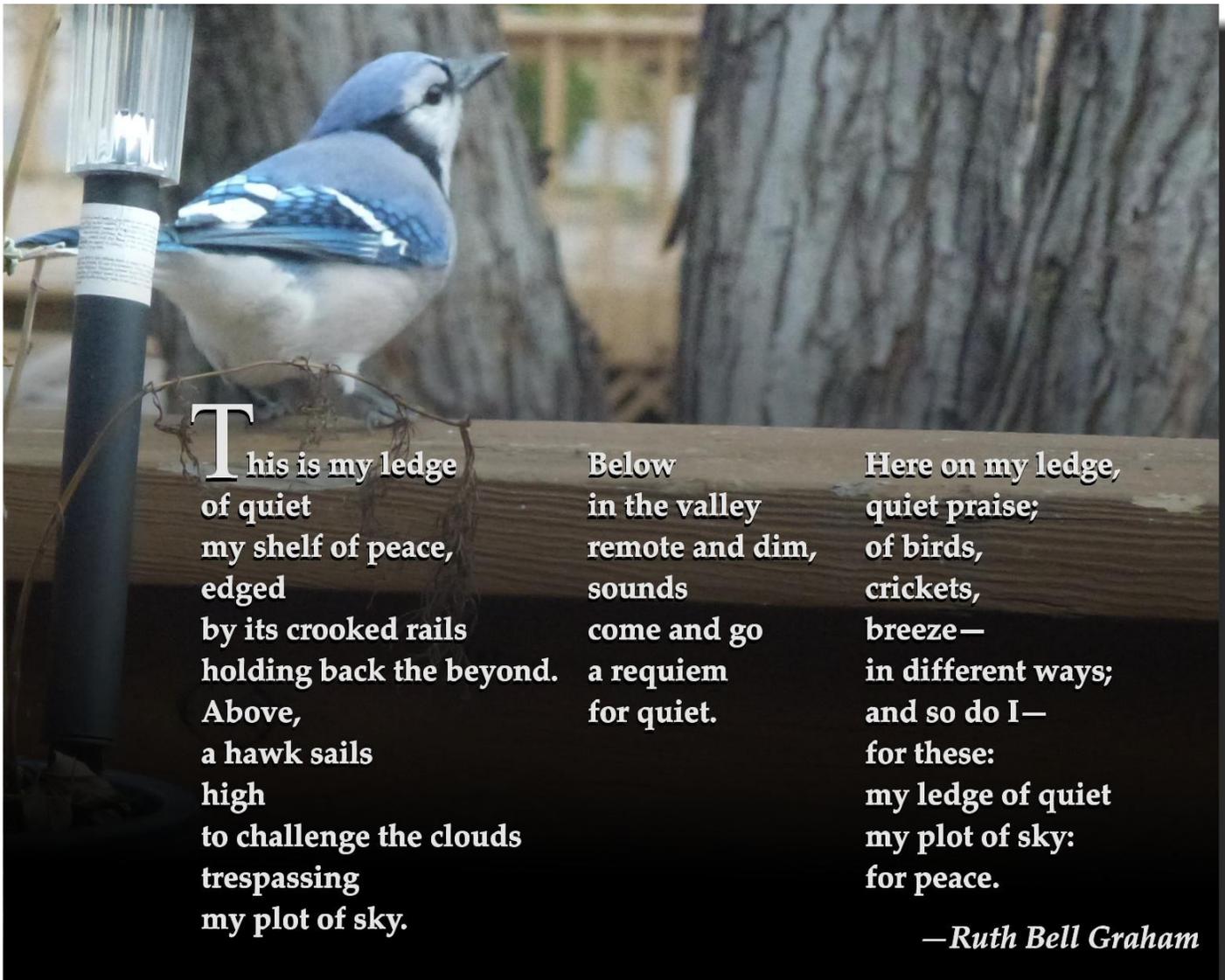
Survived by daughter Wendy (Robert) Epstein; sons Douglas (Wanda), Stuart, and Robert (Robin) Hajicek; eleven grandchildren Hannah Epstein, and Joshua, Alisa, Alexander, Blane, Dakotah, Asiah, Matthew, Adele, Leighton and Ynessa Hajicek; sister Sandra (David) Van Loo, nieces and nephews, and many other friends and relatives.



She enjoyed the serenity of the woods and lakes of Minnesota. Her greatest love has been to care







This is my ledge
of quiet
my shelf of peace,
edged
by its crooked rails
holding back the beyond.
Above,
a hawk sails
high
to challenge the clouds
trespassing
my plot of sky.

Below
in the valley
remote and dim,
sounds
come and go
a requiem
for quiet.

Here on my ledge,
quiet praise;
of birds,
crickets,
breeze—
in different ways;
and so do I—
for these:
my ledge of quiet
my plot of sky:
for peace.

—*Ruth Bell Graham*

Jannette Dorothy Kurak

Age 75, of Brooklyn Park, passed away peacefully the morning of November 6, 2012 in the presence of her granddaughter Hannah. Preceded in death by parents, her brother Jack, sister Susan, step-sons John and James Hajicek, her beloved uncle Doug Angove of Brisbane, Australia, and cousin Phyllis Angove of Redruth, Cornwall.

Donations suggested to an animal rescue shelter, wildlife organization, the Audubon Society or the Raptor Center in memory of Jan's devotion to all creatures great and small.

**Memorial Service in the Oakwood Room
French Regional Park, Plymouth, MN
November 18th, 2012, 2pm**