

Mom

From an early age you dealt with a harsh world. You were a small child who found joy in nature and in your family. We grew up with your stories of your adored cousin Tibor, who was like a brother to you. The world you knew changed too quickly and you were forced to cope with parting from your family and with the Holocaust, but you were always able to maintain a kind of faith and a childlike innocence that protected you and made you a special person. The child you were before the war always remained within you.

Your life was a long journey. You looked for a place where you could feel safe and loved, and so you came to Israel and the Kibbutz. You started your own family with Dad and also brought grandma Elisabeth and grandpa Janos over.

You always told us how you came to the Kibbutz from France with groomed hair and long fingernails and how at Ulpan you were taught to roll up your sleeves and clean toilets.

You would not age. You always were a somewhat eternal child. Last week, when we were with you, you said you wanted to live twenty more years and to see your grandchildren grown, to know what they would be like.

At age 81 when you came out of extended hospitalization due to stroke, Social Security came to check you for daily functions. You said you didn't feel old and made such an effort to show you were still young, strong and able. You performed flexibility and strength exercises just like you did as a young gymnast. Only after Dad died you agreed to have a caregiver.

Subha came to you like a gift from heaven. Exactly right for you, energetic with a bright smile and a kind heart. Even though she doesn't speak Hebrew and certainly not Hungarian, you found a common language very quickly. She knew all your childhood stories and you even had a shared humor. She knew how to read you and knew when you needed company and when you wanted your peace. She was your caregiver and your friend. Thank you, Subaha, for all you are and what you were for Mom.

Mom, you were a born artist, talented at almost every art form. Singing, playing, drawing, painting, sculpture. Looking at art with you was always an interesting and enriching experience for me. You could always explain the choice of colours, the composition and the difference between looking closely or from a distance. You taught me how to understand and appreciate art and I'm grateful to you for that.

My love for music is also a gift from you. I remember how as children we used to go to the playground in Ma'abarot. When the brave boys climbed to the top of the tower, you stayed with little me who could not yet climb a ladder that high. We would swing together on the wheel swing, facing each other, and you would sing "The Eucalyptus grove" for me. I was young but to this day I remember how enchanted I was by the beauty of that song and how beautifully you sang it. Every time we went there, I would ask you to sing that song and later on we sang it together on the swing. That was when I began to love singing.

For your 80th birthday we wrote new lyrics for that song, telling your story. We recorded it with you, the children and grandchildren, joined by Offira Glouska, the original performer. You loved the song dedicated to you so much, you kept on talking about it with excitement for a long time.

We would like to play the song for you here, for the last time:

<https://youtu.be/WMH6q0WAu8E>