

# *Rose*

*Past Life Recollections of  
Marie Fox O'Brien*

## **A List of Books**

Marie's Story - An Extraordinary Odyssey

### **Channeled Books**

Martin's Original Writings  
Revelations  
The Divine Nature of Man  
Lessons  
A new Endeavor  
Concepts  
Prayers

### **Past Lives**

Moses  
Zorah  
Rose  
Joseph II  
Edam the Elder and Saleh  
and Inga - Pala - Bana  
Peter and Ann  
Romulus  
Remembrances-The Holy Family  
Martin's Life Remembered

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**Friday, 7/1/94**

The other day when Martin asked me to try to remember, what I could see was a little girl and a tall man dressed, I thought, in black. They were walking along a narrow road or wide path, the land level on both sides, and it seemed to me brownish and sere, but in the distance were the outlines of hills. The little girl, about five, was skipping ahead of her father and then skipping back to put her hand in his, as if for reassurance, and she would look up at him smiling, waiting for the brilliant smile that she so loved. Then, as if she could not contain her exuberance, she would let go his hand and skip off again. He looked after her smilingly each time. I had the feeling as I remembered that something was wrong with the little girl, and it came to me that she could not speak. No words passed between them. Just smiles.

Then I saw them in the house, in a fair sized room with a long table with benches on each side. There was a hearth with a coal fire, and a kettle hung over it on an iron bar. The table was off a little to the right of the fireplace, one of

the narrow ends close to it. On the left a woman sat watching the children who were about the table in a disorderly way -- some sitting, some kneeling on the bench half way onto the table. They seemed to be noisy, though I could hear no sound. Then the little girl went up to her mother and demanded by signaling to sit on her lap. The mother smiled and pulled her over the arm of the chair so that she lay sideways across her lap, her head resting on her mother's right shoulder. Almost as soon as she had settled into her mother's embrace, she wriggled free and went to join her brothers and sisters at the table. They made room for her, but seemed to pay no further attention to her.

Today as I went back again I realized that I must be that child who heard no sounds and could not speak, and that the tall man was Martin, my father. I saw that room again, and I saw him bend over and kiss his wife gently as soon as he came into the room. Then he took off his jacket and hung it up, then went over to the table and sat on the bench facing his wife at the end near the fireplace.

The children stopped their play long enough to

greet him with hugs and kisses and then returned to their play. I watched my father and mother as they spoke to each other and hungered to know what they were saying. I had already learned some words though I could not hear or say them. My father was the schoolmaster, and although my mother thought it a waste of time, my father insisted on teaching me. My mother had begun almost as soon as I could walk to teach me to be useful about the house. It was my job to scour the kettles and pots outside where the coarse sandy soil helped clean them to a shine. I knew already how to build and feed the fire. My joy, though, was when my father took me to the table and taught me. He began with counting. He would break sticks into small pieces and lay them on the table. When he put the first stick down he would raise one finger and on a slate write "ONE" and mouth the word. Then he would add another and teach me the meaning of "TWO."

Although I tried, I could not repeat the sounds, but I began to know the words through the shape and motion of his lips. I was quick at copying the words on the slate. Then he taught

me addition and subtraction in the same way, and nothing rewarded me like his smile. In the same way I began to learn to write words. He would point to the table, or the fire, or the floor and print each word on the slate, and I would watch his lips as he said the word. I never tired of being tested, though I was slow at reading his lips.

I remember that there was a loft where the children slept with a cloth partition separating the boys from the girls. We did not have beds, but mats filled with feathers on the floor. Above each mat was a wooden hook for our day clothes as we slept and our night clothes by day. For washing it was necessary to use a basin and pitcher on a table near the foot of the ladder.

**Sunday, 7/3/94**

I know I am my father's favorite. He takes such pains with me. My mother does not approve. She says that it is God's will that I cannot hear and speak, that I need to learn the homely skills for which I am equipped, nothing more. My fa-

ther smiles and says nothing and goes on teaching me. Sometimes I spend hours watching moving mouths and trying to make sense of them, and I think I will never learn, but when my father with infinite patience teaches me, I learn.

I learn to associate the shape of sounds with the objects I have learned through the printed words, and each time I am tested I grow more confident. I know little, but I am proud of that little, and I am pleased when I see my father's approval, when he takes me on his lap and holds me in his arms and I know his love. My mother is not unkind, but she is practical above all things, and from her I learn to be useful. I do my part in hauling water, in heating it in a big kettle outside the back door for washing clothes and for bathing. I learn to spread the clothes over shrubs and bushes to dry. I am not tall enough to reach even the lowest branches of the trees.

There are six of us children, four girls and two boys. Ned is the oldest, and then my two sisters, and then a boy, and then my next youngest sister and me. We share well. Each of us has two sets of clothes, carefully tended and handed down. Once my father gave me a new ribbon. Every-



thing else I have ever had is handed down. The shoes when they get to me are a little misshapen from so many feet, but I do not mind. They are always comfortable by then.

At night before we go to bed we each kiss our parents and then each other, youngest to eldest. We are not expected to kneel and pray like so many other children, but we have always known that God and His angels expect to hear our words before we sleep. Our father has told us many stories of this and told us over and over that if we listen closely we will hear our angels speak, perhaps even the Lord Himself.

**Monday 7/4/94 5:12 PM**

When I try to remember again, I remember first of all the learning. From the very beginning I was hungry to learn and my father was happy to teach me. We spent hours sitting at one end of the table, and as he pointed to each object I wrote the word on my slate after I had mastered it and committed the letters to memory, and then my father would carefully mouth the word

and I would try to imitate these mouthings and create sound.

My father was infinitely patient, and I never knew what failure my words were, but I learned quickly to write. Then, from objects we went to actions -- talk, walk, run, sit, stand -- and these were easy. When gestures and mime were effective my father used them. I loved it when he took our learning outdoors and I learned the names of trees, of plants. I learned what the distant hills were called.

My mother continued to be tolerant, and eventually became encouraging, and she stopped frowning when she thought I was taking up too much of my father's time. The other children were fascinated at first, but quickly became bored with what we were doing, and though we shared the table we were alone, my father and I, in the midst of the activities that marked our family. There was a lot of laughter. I recognized it, though I could not hear it.

My mother oversaw everything with quiet control. She was a woman tall for that time, though not as tall as my father. I remember her always with a kerchief carefully arranged about her neck

and fastened with a brooch. Her eyes were clear and deep blue, and her brown hair was pulled back severely from her face, coiled in a braid at the nape of her neck. When she let her hair down at night the braid hung to below her waist. She was pretty, though not beautiful, and she had a calm command of her household. She was devoted to her family in all ways, and it was easy to take for granted the depth of her love for our father and for us. She was both demanding and tolerant and did not have to raise her voice to be heard.

Eventually my father decided that I should be allowed to go to school. There was no question of my participating fully, but I was allowed to sit in the classroom and learn what I could without special attention. At first everyone made a fuss over me. Then they forgot I was there. Nobody dared to be mean to me or to make fun of me. I spent much time being confused as I tried to master all that was written on the blackboard. The arithmetic was the easiest. Most days I walked home with my brothers and sisters, generally tagging along behind, but sometimes I was allowed to wait for my father, and as we walked

home he would continue with his teaching, pointing out new things and writing the words for me. Sometimes we would stop on the way and he would carefully spread his handkerchief to sit on so as not to get his trousers dusty. I would carefully raise my skirts before I sat and then brush the dirt off my underpants before we left.

I remember the school as one large room with fifty or so desks. I remember the older students, particularly my oldest sister, being put in charge of the younger and helping them with their learning. My father did not tolerate any meanness among his students though he had a tolerance for good humored mischief. He was loved.

**Sunday, 7/17/94 3:42 PM**

[Recently Martin asked me to go back to and write about a life we led some time ago, and when I tried to remember I knew that I was a child and Martin my father. I knew that I was deaf and mute and that my father was the schoolmaster. I wrote all that I remembered in

the notebook I keep for my memories, "vignettes" as Martin calls them. As always, I was unsure of the accuracy of my remembering and I needed Martin's reassurance. He gave me this reassurance in the words that follow.]

In that blessed life we led long ago, my darling, we knew the joy of perfect understanding in an imperfect world. You were the child I held dearest to my heart, and in you I found all the pleasures of love perfect and entire shared in all ways. It was my delight to bring warmth and beauty into your silent world, and to teach you the ways in which you could communicate your needs and your desires. You knew instinctively how to communicate your love. There was no teaching needed there.

In the end you taught me more than I taught you, and you brought to our household an awareness of human love in all of us, and in all of us you kindled a desire to understand each other in our individual needs and talents. There was from the beginning a bond between us, my darling daughter, that set you apart from the other children, all of whom were totally loved by their mother and their father, and this love we

gave generously and without hesitation to all our children made it impossible for them not to love each other wholly and unconditionally. There was never a trace of envy in this beautiful group that we called our children, and you, my love, were the star.

There were times when I despaired of conveying to you all I longed for you to know and master, and never, my darling, were you incapable of reassuring me in every way. You believed in me so fully that it was impossible for me not to believe fully in myself. Go back now, my dearest, to those days and write further.

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I remember your patience. I remember wishing I could hear your laughter, the ready banter of my brothers and sisters, the loving words of my mother as she held me close. I did not know the nature of sound, the mystery of the spoken word, instant communication, but I longed for it. I longed to speak, and in the dark of night I would try to make words.

When the other children saw that I was beginning to learn, they paid new attention to me. They watched our father in his instruction and they imitated him in their efforts to communicate with me. They mouthed words endlessly while pointing at each other and at objects and waited for me to repeat them. Once my oldest brother laughed thoughtlessly at my efforts, but only once. No one rebuked him, but their stares and their silence spoke correction. He began to be the most earnest of all in trying to help me. When I began to go to school with them, simply to sit and observe, it was he who appointed himself my protector and guide.

And I did learn through my eyes much of the wonders of the world. Though much escaped me, the more I learned at home the more I understood in school, and soon my skills at calculation were a source of pride to my father, and I began to know pride in myself. Even my mother, when she heard the reports of my progress softened in her attitude, her feeling that learning was beyond a child who could not hear and could not speak, and she began to move her lips slowly when she spoke to me, indicating all the while

what she was saying with gestures. "Come," she would say, calling me to her, "Come," and soon I needed only to watch her lips to obey this command. I learned homely words -- "wash", "clean", "table", "dishes", "pots", "pans" -- the endless vocabulary of daily life in the home, and I spent even more secret hours trying to make sounds. I learned quickly to read the sounds on others' lips, but it was a long, long time before I was intelligible in my speech, and even longer before I could think in phrases or sentences.

Through all of this learning, my father was my inspiration. I knew that he had no doubt of how much I could accomplish despite my affliction, and I knew that never could or would I disappoint him. Gradually word of my accomplishments spread throughout our small community, and I became a sort of celebrity. More importantly I was able to help a young boy about my age with the same affliction. His parents, lacking my father's faith in learning and faith in me, had made no effort to teach him, and he existed in the still world I knew so well in complete isolation. In time he became almost a part of our household, welcomed by all the warm souls I



was privileged to call my family, and the light in his eyes and the gestures of affection we knew from him were reward enough for all of us.

And so the years passed, happy engaging years, and one by one my brothers and sisters left our household to begin lives of their own, and I was left alone of the young ones. By this time, I was competent in many ways.

**Monday, 7/18/94 4:57 AM**

There was such joy for me in teaching. When I first knew this joy I determined that nothing in my life would ever be allowed to interfere with its importance to me. At first there was opposition to my abandoning the role to which I was born, that of the eldest son, destined to inherit the meager portion of land that provided subsistence to our family, but before the death of my father it came to be that the husband of my eldest sister cheerfully agreed, lacking other responsibilities, to take my place in working the acreage that provided us with a livelihood. This left me free to apprentice myself to a schoolmaster in a

neighboring village. The pittance I received was meager indeed, and I shall be forever grateful to my brother in law and my sister for supplementing it from their limited resources to permit me to fulfill my dreams.

There was no question of being able to live solely on the earnings of a school teacher until I completed my apprenticeship and found a place willing to give me full responsibility. Indeed what happened was most fortunate for me. The school master under whom I trained, though a very young man for serious illness, became incapacitated and was forced to curtail his activities. At first he was able to assume responsibility for half the day, but as he weakened, I was called up to replace him fully more and more, and long before I dreamed it would happen I was made master of the school, in full charge of these striving young minds and able to take on an apprentice of my own.

It was a heady experience, being a school master for one who had dreamed of this life it seemed almost since birth, and each day brought fresh pleasure to my existence. Indeed in a short time I was invited to live with one of the families I

served and eliminate the daily travel from my home. At first I felt that this would be too much of an imposition on my sister and her good husband, this total surrender of the responsibility which was mine by birth and which they had cheerfully assumed to set me free, but when I spoke to them tentatively about living elsewhere, they were vehement in their insistence that they were indeed ready and able for full management of the farm, that indeed they would find great pleasure in total control, although my sister hastened to add blushing that of course they would miss my nightly presence. She added that though I was unaware of it, they would soon need additional space for the family that they hoped to have, the first child being already on the way. Nothing could have pleased me more than this news. I felt that the hand of providence was indeed guiding me on my way and that I was the most fortunate of men in this. (5:15)

7:35 PM

In a sense the most important of my achievements was learning to be a musician. We owned a piano, a small one to be sure, and it was my mother's treasure. It became my treasure. As early as I can remember, I watched my mother teach my brothers and sisters to read and play music. I watched their fingers and their faces, and I did not have to be told that they were not happy with this discipline. None of them, it seems, had inherited my mother's love and talent for music. It was her joy. I watched her expressions as she played and sang and longed to know the sounds she made.

In the evenings after my father came home and after the evening meal, they would go to the piano and he would watch with a smile as she played and sang. Even when I was very small, my father would hold me and with infinite gentleness hold my fingers to my mother's throat as she sang. The first time I was frightened by the vibration, but I soon grew to love it and to distinguish tone. I don't know how much persuasion it took for my father to convince my

mother that I was capable of learning to play her beloved instrument. I know it was after I first began to learn other things that she led me to the piano one day after she had finished with my brothers and sisters. I was frightened, but as my father looked on, my mother pointed to the note on the page of musical annotation and then to the key on the piano it represented. It was as though I had been born with this knowledge. I rarely made an error, and her pleasure knew no bounds, though it must have disturbed her to realize that her talent had been passed on only to her deaf mute child.

I knew her pleasure from the first time, but I did not anticipate the frustrations that lay ahead for both of us. I played with absolute accuracy, but I played totally without timing or tonality. With infinite patience my mother taught me the difference between half notes and whole notes, the importance of loudness and softness, the critical role of sharps and flats. Above all she taught me by her pleasure when I had succeeded, and my memory retained all I had done that had elicited her approval.

It came to be that I would often go to the piano

by myself and play. I could not call it practice, because I could not tell the difference between right and wrong in my efforts, but my enjoyment in seeing my fingers fly was infinite and some of the movement of the music came through my fingertips. I progressed from simple pieces to more difficult to truly complex, and I retain still vividly in my mind the faces of my parents when I finished and turned to face them. My brothers and sisters were relieved to have the focus of my mother's desire to pass on to her children her love and talent turn to me, and little by little they were relieved of the onerous burden to trying to do something they were incapable of doing. Little by little when we had company, I was the one called on to entertain our guests and although I could not hear their expressions of approval I knew I had pleased and impressed.

In all of this I sought to please. There was so little, I thought in those days, that I could do to compete in a hearing, speaking world, and never for a moment was I without the unqualified love of both of my parents. My mother had gladly joined my father in his faith in me, and by the time I was sixteen I had begun to think that

there were other worlds I could conquer.

**Tuesday, 7/19/94 2:42 PM**

My spirits rose each time I looked at my child, my Rose, more beautiful than any flower, more tender than the tenderest of blossoms. When she was born it was clear that she was the most beautiful of our children, and when I first held her in my arms I knew what her name must be. From that very first moment she was a constant joy, the most placid of infants, the most responsive to a smile or a tender touch. Only gradually did we realize that our beloved Rose did not respond to sound. At first we were disbelieving. It was impossible to imagine any defect in our beautiful child, but time made it clear that our darling did indeed lack the capacity to hear the loudest sounds. She lived in her own silent beautiful world, and in all ways she grew in love and beauty.

We knew that if she could not hear, she could not speak, perhaps ever, and our hearts broke with this knowledge. Her clear gaze was fixed al-

ways on movement rather than sound, and we knew at once that she must be cherished in special ways. Her brothers and sisters spent endless hours playing with her and speaking to her, and she would smile in delight at their antics. My sweet wife and I held her in our arms and spoke lovingly to her, hoping that the intensity of the love we were trying to convey would be, and I think indeed that Rose did from the beginning sense the enormity of the love that filled our hearts for her. Her every response indicated this. She would snuggle down in our close embraces. She would reach out to touch tenderly. She would hug with a persistence and a strength that broke our hearts once again in the intensity it conveyed of her desire to express herself. Indeed perhaps it was a need to reassure herself that we needed her as much as she needed us.

And so our Rose thrived and grew in beauty and radiance. As God would have it, she was the last of our children, and we were grateful to be so blessed with this child that our lives were filled with knowing her needs, her love, her goodness, and filled with a great desire that this special child know special guidance. Her intelligence



shone in her eyes, and she could barely walk before I began my efforts to teach her. I had no skills, no experience in working with such a child, and I hesitated at first to ask too much of her and crush her spirit. I need not have worried. My Rose had an avid desire to learn even from this early an age, and my simple methods from the start evoked a ready response in my darling child, (2:56 PM)

## 5:23 PM

[Martin told me to write and said that he would be in my pen.]

It was when I was sixteen that all of our lives changed. There was an inspector who came to my father's school that year. There were yearly visits by such officials to all the schools, but this inspector was high in the hierarchy and did not routinely do official visits, but he had heard of my father and his success in teaching even the most limited and difficult of students, and he found it hard to believe that a man with such talent would be content to limit himself to a small

country school. Though he did not say so at first, he came also of curiosity about me. He had heard stories he could hardly accept as truth.

By that time I was no longer attending my father's school, having completed the curriculum two years before, but my father continued to encourage and supervise my education. He found books for me to devour, and he encouraged me to try my wings at writing. I began with a daily journal, but soon tried various other kinds of writing. I loved writing poetry, but I was not very good at it. I shared the household responsibilities with my mother, indeed tried to do the lion's share and encourage her to spend more time in leisure or at the piano.

One or the other of us was at the piano most of the time. I had about that time made a few tentative efforts at musical composition -- brief, simple melodies -- and although my mother was not fulsome in her praise, she encouraged me to continue my efforts. By then, too, I was skilled at lip reading except for the most rapid speech or accents that were new to me, and I took great pride in my skill in this. I was not as skilled in speaking. Indeed I hesitated to speak at all out-

side my house, but I continued to practice sounds, both old and new.

So by the time the inspector came there was reason to marvel at my father's success in teaching me --- and my mother's as well, though the inspector had no reason to know of that until he visited our home. The day he visited the school, my father invited him to share our evening meal, and my mother betrayed a little irritation when my father appeared with an unexpected guest, but my mother was above all capable and the meal she produced though not lavish was commendable.

Our guest showed himself both courtly and gracious from the moment he entered the room. He shook our hands gravely and bowed respectfully to my mother. It was she whom he insisted on hearing at the piano, and she blushed at his flattery. When she had finished he applauded vigorously and asked for more. She complied readily, and I was almost beginning to despair of being able to display my talents when she pushed herself back from the keyboard and held out her hand to me.

I reveled in this opportunity. Never had I played

for a stranger, and I decided to begin simply and to progress to the difficult. During dinner I had not spoken a word, and with great tact and consideration the inspector had included me in the conversation without demanding any response. I had been able to follow most of what was said, and I yearned to be able to participate fully and perfectly, but I knew it was beyond me.

There was, however, no fault in my music, and I was almost transported into another world as I played from memory some of the compositions I loved best. When I finished I was regretful that I could not hear the sounds of approval I knew were forthcoming, and I paused before I turned around. When I did, my mother came to me and held me in her arms briefly before leading me to where my father and the inspector sat. I saw my father's proud smile and I knew the words the inspector spoke. "Extraordinary. Extraordinary. Never seen anything like it. Extraordinary." I was trembling with excitement when he took both my hands in his. He turned to my father, "We shall have to speak further of this young lady, sir. Indeed we must." My father did not respond exactly but smiled his wonderful smile and thanked

his guest for his kind words. I don't know if then he expected anything more of this gentleman, but he was pleased with his words. (5:52)

**Sunday, 7/24/94 3:54 PM**

I remember playing when you stood behind me and sang. Always I knew when you were there. You stood always with your left hand on my shoulder, and I could hear through this loving contact. Not "hear" in the normal sense of the word, but I could feel your voice and the love I knew from you always. Even when you were not standing behind me I took pleasure in playing your favorite melodies, in pretending that you were there.

I was alone much of the time. My mother spent more and more of her days with my brothers and sisters and their growing families. It seemed as though there was always a new little one. Above all my mother needed to feel useful, and there was no end to the need for her energy and devotion. Always, though, she was at home when my father was there, and always I knew the

sweet love they felt for each other and for me.

One day when my father came home earlier than usual I was not long in learning the reason. The inspector who had visited us wrote to say that he had arranged that I be examined by a doctor who specialized in hearing disorders, that this physician was a friend of his since early boyhood and was much interested in my case. He said that he would gladly exchange his talents for mine, that I need only perform for him in exchange for his examination and diagnosis. Immediately upon hearing these words from my father's lips -- for indeed I thought of lip reading as "hearing" -- I was frightened. I had never been away from home. I was fearful of strangers. But I listened to my father's reassurances and began to be excited about the adventure that lay ahead.

A kind neighbor picked us up on the morning of our departure in his pony trap and drove us to the nearest railway stop -- a matter of miles too long to walk. I held tightly to my father's hand as we stood on the platform, and his fingers grasped mine in reassurance. There were so many people. When the train arrived in clouds of steam I thought I had never seen such a miracle,

and when we were seated and the carriages began to move, the wonder was complete for me.

When we reached the city we went first to the hospital, a large multi-storied building, the largest I had ever imagined. The corridors seemed endless, and although I could not hear with my ears I sensed the hush. I knew everybody spoke in whispers. The doctor was waiting for us in a room cluttered with books and equipment. My father introduced me, and I watched his lips as he spoke of my difficulties and my accomplishments. The doctor kept nodding and tapping his fingers on the edge of the desk. He had a kindly face in a full beard and I instinctively trusted him.

When my father finished, he motioned me to a chair next to an enormous machine with dials and gauges, and I began to be frightened again as he put ear phones on me and fastened straps to my arms. Seeing my distress, the doctor patted me reassuringly and spoke to me. I was not familiar with the movement of his lips and shook my head in confusion. Then my father explained to me that I was to signal if I heard any sound at

all through the earphones. I nodded my understanding and then watched as the doctor moved a switch and the dials begin whirring in motion. Then he took from his desk a pad of paper and pencil and begin to take notes. Each time he adjusted a gauge he wrote numbers on his pad and I saw the dials quiver. That was all. I heard nothing. Each time I shook my head to indicate that I heard nothing, the doctor would make a note and then readjust the gauges. Again, I saw the movement of the dials. Again I heard nothing. This continued for what seemed to me a very long time. Then the doctor put down his note pad and turned off the machine. He consulted with my father, his back turned to me, and I could not read my father's expression. When the doctor turned away from him and sat down at his desk, my father came to me, smiling, and gently removed the earphones and wires. He pulled me to him and held me gently. I did not know what to think, but I knew that whatever hope this doctor's examination had held out to him was gone.

The three of us then went into a large room on the ground floor. There were many seats and a



stage. On the stage was a piano much larger than ours. My father gently led me up the stairs to the piano. He had explained that the doctor would want to hear me play. It came as a relief to put my fingers upon the keys. I did as I always did. I began simply and let the music grow more difficult and complex in execution. There was not a moment's hesitation, and I knew that when I turned around I would read approval in the doctor's eyes. There was more than approval. There was wonder and disbelief, and I was pleased. I knew my father was pleased. (4:25)

**Tuesday, 7/26/94 3:48 PM**

No one spoke for a minute or so. Then the doctor turned to my father and said, "Wait" or "Wait here." I am not sure which. Then he turned and hurried from the room. My father mounted the stairs and came to where I sat. I lifted my face to his and saw the pleasure and excitement in his eyes. He squeezed my shoulder. I let my hands play idly over the keys as we waited. It put me more at ease, and when my father lifted his hand from my shoulder I turned and saw that the doc-

tor was back. Along with him were three men, one of them the inspector, I noted with surprise. The other two were physicians I surmised from their dress.

My father went to greet them, and I watched as they shook hands and spoke among themselves. The doctor who had examined me gestured animatedly and spoke at more length than the others. The inspector kept glancing at me, and I finally had the courage to smile at him. I was beginning to think of him as a friend. He nodded and smiled back and then rejoined the discussion. After several minutes during which I could clearly see that my father was answering many questions, my father returned to me at the piano and asked me to play once more. This time I did not start with simple pieces but immediately began to play the most challenging selections I knew. I played almost in a frenzy, and when I was finished I dropped my hands in my lap and slumped in fatigue. All the strangeness of the day seemed to have caught up with me at once. I thought I had never been so tired. At the same time I was swept with excitement.

This time all of them rushed onto the stage and

over to me. The inspector seized my hands and raised them to his lips. "Blessed," I saw him say. There were tears in my father's eyes as he heard the words of praise I knew he would repeat to me later, and suddenly my fatigue was gone and my whole being surrendered to the pleasurable excitement I knew.

I slept on our homeward journey despite my excitement, and when I awakened my head was resting on my father's shoulder and my clasped hands were in his lap. I had been dreaming, but I could not remember my dream exactly. It had to do with music, and I knew great happiness in this dream. I could remember nothing else. Our neighbor was waiting for us at the train station.

I could not believe how much had happened in a single day. It seemed a much longer time.

**Saturday, 7/30/94 3:55 PM**

My heart swelled with pride in all that my Rose accomplished, but when I heard the words of praise from that group of distinguished gentlemen my pride knew no limits. I so longed for my

Rose to hear their words directly, and I determined to remember them with exactness so that I could recount them to her later when we were alone. And recount them I did on our homeward journey, and I saw my darling smile in dreamy contentment. I knew how tired she was as a result of all this strange activity and I held her close to me as she dozed off.

There was little doubt in my mind that the day was one I would never forget, that it marked a turning point in all our lives, and that these changes would be welcome to my Rose. I was aware of all her talents. Not only was she a superb pianist, but her efforts at composing were extraordinary. The lyric quality of her music was almost ethereal. She had shown me little of what she wrote in her journal, but that little bespoke talent in composition that approached the talent she exhibited as a musician. I knew that I had been given a great gift in this child, so exceptional in so many ways, so eager to learn and to expand her horizons. She was a source of wonder to all who knew her and all who knew of her, and I was certain that these distinguished gentlemen would not forget this day, nor would

they forget my child.

The inspector, Mr. Forester, had assured me before we left the hospital that he would contact me at a later date about my Rose, that whereas he was not at all certain what the next step would be, there would indeed be a next step, that this extraordinary talent should be encouraged and nurtured. I recounted all of this to my sweet wife on arriving at home. Late in the day as it was, I knew that she had done little but await our return. Her disappointment at hearing of the doctor's examination was tempered by my account of Rose's playing and of the outpouring of praise that followed. I was not able to offer her even a guess about what would happen next, simply my assurance that this day would be a memorable one in all that was to follow.

We stayed up much later than usual that night, speculating on a future that was hidden from us. Rose had gone to sleep directly on our return, and before we slept we went to gaze upon that beloved face, as serene in repose as it was in activity. We thanked God for this gift that had lighted our lives and which it was our privilege to love and protect from all harm. In the love of

this child our love of all else was enriched and strengthened, and we slept that night in the absolute assurance that all that lay ahead for our Rose was blessed indeed. (4:10)

## **Monday, 8/1/94 4:10 PM**

I woke up very early the morning after our great adventure. The loft where I had shared space with my brothers and sisters was mine alone now and more amply furnished. There was a simple bed against the wall, and by the tiny window a low table and a comfortable chair where I sat often to daydream. The ladder had been replaced by a short flight of steps along the wall opposite the bed, built by my father and Ned, who was very clever with his hands.

That morning I threw off the bed covers and knelt looking out the window. As I watched the break of day I relived every moment of the day before. I idly counted the white dots in the growing light that I knew were sheep grazing in a nearby hillside pasture. I tried to recall all that had been said. I tried to recapture my feeling of

triumph as I had played for the gentlemen. I tried not to recall the feeling of disappointment I felt as I watched my father's face after the doctor's words. I let my self hope that this day marked a beginning rather than an end, but I could not imagine what the possibilities were. I knew so little outside my own small world.

When it was fully light I dressed quickly and left the house. Almost without thinking I found myself heading for the spot my father and I most favored to sit together. I had been there only a short time when I felt a gentle touch on my arm and turned to find him smiling at me. Nothing was as precious to me as my father's smile. I started to rise, but he gently pressed my shoulder and sat beside me. I watched his lips. "I thought I would find you here." And then we spoke of the previous day. I was never self conscious speaking to my father, though I was acutely with everyone else. He had a gift of understanding me perfectly.

**Monday 8/8/98 9:49 AM**

[Martin awakened me as I dozed and said that there was much remembering and writing to be done this morning. I told him how much I needed his help.]

I remember that for weeks after our day with the doctors and the inspector I met my father at the door each afternoon and searched his face expectantly. Each day he would smile his tender smile and shake his head slowly side to side. "Not yet," he would say sometimes. "Soon," he would say at other times, or "I know we will hear." Always words of hope and encouragement.

I was not hopeful. Each day seemed to drain hope from me. I spent hours each day at the piano and hours walking by myself. Sometimes I went with my mother to spend time with my brothers and sisters and their families, but I was less and less comfortable with them.

Then there came the day when my father appeared with the inspector at his side. My father's face was flushed with excitement, and I felt my



heart begin to pound fiercely, but I maintained my composure enough to greet my father, as I always did, with a loving embrace and to bow politely to the inspector. Slowly and reluctantly I left them to their talk and continued preparations for our evening meal. As always it was simple food and ample for an additional guest.

When my mother arrived she brought with her summer berries she had gathered along the road.

It was not until we had finished eating that my father indicated that it was time for serious discussion. He said that the inspector came to us in friendship and helpfulness. At this the inspector interrupted to say that it was his pleasure and his privilege to recognize talent and to encourage it. Immediately I assumed that the inspector spoke of me, and I was chagrined when he went on to describe the extraordinary talent that my father exhibited as a teacher and of the great need there was for his talents in conveying his skills to others. I must have blushed with embarrassment, but if I did, no one seemed to notice. All eyes were on the inspector. He came, he said, to persuade my father to move to the city to establish a teacher training center, an institution of learning

where all those young men and women could receive the kind of instruction which would insure the most effective development of their skills. It would be a modest beginning, he said, and something of an experiment. If the experiment succeeded and my father was pleased with his new life it could become permanent, but there were no guarantees except for the guarantee that if he found that he preferred to return to his present position as school master he would be free to do so.

During all of this talk I watched my mother's face, and I could not read her reaction. I knew that she would say nothing of her thoughts until she and my father were alone. As for me, I hoped that my reaction was equally hidden. As I listened my spirits plummeted. I could not imagine daily life without my father. I could not imagine my mother leaving her home. I could not imagine my mother and my father separated.

Then I looked searchingly at my father's face and in his eyes I saw something that told me that there was more to what the inspector had to say. Almost immediately, then, the inspector turned his gaze on me, and as if in a dream I heard him

speak of the other talent in this family, one that should be equally nurtured and shared. He spoke of a place where I would study the music I loved and of a second place where I would learn the skills that would enable me to communicate with greater ease. I need have no fear, he said, I was more than capable.

I had not, to this point, ever tried to speak in the inspector's presence. I knew I had to then.

"Thank you," I said, "You are very kind," I could not tell from his expression if I had spoken clearly, but I saw him say "Thank you. It is my privilege," and I knew I had been understood. The inspector continued, saying that should we decide to go that he would make all necessary arrangements, that he had a dear friend recently widowed who had to rent a set of rooms that would suit us well. His eyes twinkled as he added that she had a piano in her parlor and he had lately heard her complain that it was never used now that her children were grown and gone. He was so kind to me. (10:22)

**Friday, 8/21/98 2:48AM**

Rose, in her goodness, was aware and grateful for all the gifts she had been given. She rejoiced in the pleasure she found in her music. She rejoiced even more in the pleasure it afforded others, particularly the father whose faith had nourished and sustained her since birth and whose wisdom had guided her always. Now that she approached a culmination of sorts in her striving, she was acutely aware of the need to express fully to her parents her hopes for the future, but even more did she feel compelled to try to explain to them and to her brothers and sisters as well her intense awareness of how their loving concern and unequivocal love had spurred her on always, even when she knew little of what lay ahead with the severity of her limitation. From the very start she had been encouraged by all those who loved her to do her very best to achieve her dreams, dreams at first simple and uncomplicated, now beyond her early imagining.

**Sunday, 8/23/98 8:58AM**

It was extraordinary that our lives could be so changed so quickly. In short order I turned over my teaching duties to my apprentice and he in turn found a replacement for himself. My dear wife, fond as she was of our home and her proximity to her grown children and her grandchildren, agreed to leave with me with the understanding that one of our married daughters occupy our home while we were gone. This came as a pleasant change for our child. She and her husband had been seeking more spacious quarters and this came as at least a temporary solution.

Rose, needless to say, was radiant in her joyful expectation. She spent hours at the piano and it seemed to me that each day her talents became more remarkable. She had by this time an imposing portfolio of her own compositions. They seemed all to reflect the dreamy quality I could imagine she felt in her silent world.

In all, I was grateful for all our friend the inspector had done for us. Never for a moment did I fear the challenge that my new assignment pre-

sented. I dreamed of a generation of new teachers armed with awareness of how to reach the most limited of students, and I thanked God for having sent me my Rose who had taught me so much of learning.

Before we left all our friends and townspeople gathered to wish us godspeed and to present us with gifts. We were all touched by this loving thoughtfulness and hoped that one day we would return to this home and to all those we had learned to cherish. It was particularly difficult for my wife to know that she would not be seeing her children and grandchildren for longer than she had ever imagined would occur, and so that leave taking was painful for her and for them, but in their love they found joy for Rose and for me. They knew the intensity of my love for teaching, and they were generous in their estimate of all the good I would do in my new assignment. They envisioned, as I did, a changed world in the education of the young. Their pride was a source of enormous pleasure, and again I thanked God for having so blessed me.

As for Rose, she fairly floated. Her joy was un-mixed. While she regretted leaving her brothers

and sisters she had full faith that we would one day know the pleasure of being together again, and it was her determination to succeed that so buoyed her spirits. I watched her face as we spoke of the joys to come and I knew that my child could not fail. (9:15)

## **10:50PM**

It is so long since I have remembered my life as Rose that I am uncertain of my memory. When I envision our journey from our home to the city, I see two suitcases, farewell gifts from our friends, and a large bundle trussed with rope. We do not have many things to transport beyond the few basic clothes in our wardrobes, but my mother has chosen to take with her a number of household items, things to remind her of home and comfort her in lonely moments.

The day of our departure we left in a foggy mist. The pony trap was laden with our persons and our belongings so that I feared the poor pony would collapse with effort, but he did not seem overwhelmed and we pulled into the station well

before the arrival of the train. I had not enjoyed the ride.

My parents sat side by side on one side of the aisle and I sat alone on the opposite side until a stranger came and sat beside me. I was still not comfortable with strangers and I looked straight ahead, careful not to seem friendly. When he nudged me gently I did turn to look at him and realized that he had been speaking to me. I could not read his lips, and so I simply looked away and straight ahead once again.

My father, observing my discomfort, came to my aid. He suggested that I exchange seats with him and guided me across the aisle. I settled in gratefully beside my mother, who was quietly dabbing at the tears that she could not control. Briefly I was miserable, feeling that not only had I caused my mother unhappiness but that I had been proven a failure in my very first encounter with a stranger. I took comfort in all that the inspector had promised in our new life -- challenge for my father in a new endeavor for which he was ideally suited, and wonderful opportunity for me to learn much, both in the world of music and in the world of sound.



I relished the thought of being able to communicate effectively even with strangers such as the one I had just encountered. I could not envision myself in the world at large, coping with the various demands I had not yet known. It was a challenge both frightening and exciting. I looked across the aisle at my father, by now in animated conversation with the stranger, and drew strength from his certainty that great things lay ahead for both of us and for my mother as well. (11:12)

**Monday, 8/24/98 7:43PM**

I was glad to leave the train, but I was overwhelmed by the throngs crowding the platform. Everyone seemed to be hurrying in the same direction and I feared being swept along with the crowd, but my father took my arm protectively as well as my mother's and directed a porter to load our luggage on a cart. Hardly had the crowd thinned than the inspector arrived, ruddy and healthy looking, wearing a broad smile of welcome. He seized my father's hands as he released his hold on me and my mother and nodded at

the two of us. I could read the word "Welcome" on his lips, but I was lost in the exchange that followed between him and my father. My mother was as mute as I was but smiled nervously.

The inspector led us through the steam and jumbled carts and travelers uncertain, I guessed, of their bearing, to the central hall and through to the exit. Again I was overwhelmed by the bustle of people and horses, and I was amazed when the inspector led us up to the only motor car on the street. I had seen motor cars on my previous visit to the city but I had never dreamed of riding in one. The driver jumped down from his seat and secured the baggage in the rear of the car. My mother and I sat in the rear seat and my father and the inspector in the front. We were the object of many curious stares.

It seemed a very long ride to our destination. Our new and temporary home was a house large enough to be called a mansion on a quiet tree lined street far removed from the bustle of the city. When we drew up to the gate a man and a woman came rushing down the pathway to bid us welcome and to carry our luggage to the house.

I could not believe the splendor that met my eyes as I looked around the first floor. Luxurious furniture abounded. Gloriously patterned and brilliantly colored rugs covered the floors. The walls were covered with paintings that looked very old, and many of the windows were depictions of scenes in variously cut and colored glass. I looked at my parents and it seemed to me that they were equally awe struck.

We were interrupted in our survey by the inspector. He spoke with my father and signaled to the maid who led us up the staircase to our rooms. We had two large rooms joined by a large closet and storage area. I could not believe such luxury and I was not alone in my appreciation. The maid led us down the hall to point out a toilet and adjacent bath that we were to share. Then my father told me that it was the inspector's wish and that of our hostess that we unpack and refresh ourselves and that we would be summoned in a few hours for the evening meal.

**Tuesday, 8/25/98 6:25PM**

I remember how still the house was. My parents were shut in their room resting. I had finished putting away my few clothes and sat waiting for what seemed a very long time. Finally I tired of sitting and opened the door a crack. The hallway was empty. Summoning up my courage I ventured into the passage way. All I saw were closed doors. I headed for the staircase and slowly descended. When I got to the bottom of the stairs I stopped and looked about. Still no one came in sight.

I grew bolder and began to investigate. The vestibule was large and sumptuous, the floor covered with one of the colorful rugs that had impressed me at first sight. By the door was an ornate table with a large silver tray on it. On the tray were a number of cards I knew were calling cards signifying visitors. One door opening off the entry way led clearly to the library. I stopped just inside the door and gazed in awe at the walls. Each inch it seemed was packed with volumes. Some looked very old with cracked leather bindings. Along one side there was a rail with a

ladder attached designed to reach the higher shelves. There was a splendid table in the middle of the room with four chairs pulled up to it. There were reading lamps by each chair.

On my way to the opposite side of the entry way I stopped and looked through the window by the side of the front door and still saw no one. There was no activity at all in the street.

The next entry way I came to was a pleasant sitting room, generous in size, and my heart leaped when I saw the piano in one corner of the room. It was so much bigger than ours, so much grander. I could not help myself. I was drawn to the keys as to a magnet. I sat on the stool and ran my fingers over the smooth keys. I could not wait to play on this marvelous instrument, and I don't know how long I sat there, my hands resting on the keys, dreaming of what lay ahead, when I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder. I was sure it was my father and I turned smiling. To my astonishment the hand belonged to a lady I had never seen before, and behind her stood the inspector. (6:45)

**Wednesday, 8/26/98 11:13PM**

I stood up quickly, pushing aside the stool in my confusion. I did not know where to look. I was taken aback by being discovered wandering about a stranger's house. Yet I knew from the expression of the lady's face that there was no anger in her.

I stood embarrassed beyond words as the inspector and the lady spoke to each other, and within a minute or two the inspector reached for my hands and placed them in hers. I was not aware of what they were saying about me, for I assumed that I was their concern, but I felt the welcome warmth of her grasp and the tension drained from me. The inspector touched me gently, and I raised my face to read his words. "Play," he said, "Please play."

Relieved beyond all other feelings I adjusted the stool and sat once again. I rested my fingers on the keys so beautiful and so strange to me, and began to play a simple melody. In my excitement I was sure I heard, but I know that the sound came from within me. What relationship my inner music had to that which others heard I did

not know. At that moment, as at all others, it did not matter. I was supremely happy to be lost in my world of inner beauty.

When I finished I sat with my hands resting in my lap, but at the touch of the inspector, I turned to know his wish. "More," he said, "Please, more." I could not have asked for a more gratifying response to my playing and so I began to play in earnest, succeeding in the difficult, occasionally attempting the impossible. Even I was surprised by my fingers. They seemed magical, and once again I found myself lost in time and space. I do not know how long I played, but when I stopped and turned away from the keyboard I saw my father standing just behind the inspector. His smile told me all I needed to know., (11:24)

**Thursday, 8/27/98 9:36PM**

When the summons came for dinner I had cause to rejoice. Not only had I met my patron, also my friend, but we had spent special time together. The inspector had been marvelously

helpful in achieving a kind of communication between me and Mrs. Estes, our kind benefactor. I had played for a long time, it turned out, and not for a moment did either of the generous souls who had befriended us waver in their certainty that in our Rose they had a treasure.

[I do not understand the switch here from Rose speaking to her father speaking.]

After dinner that evening I spoke of the pleasure we knew in our fresh adventure, but I spoke too of the need I felt for forward achievement both for Rose and for myself. In all, it was a pleasant evening, and even Rose's mother confessed that she had found pleasure in new company and hoped that she could know enjoyment in the music she loved.

In time I was increasingly impatient as the days passed and I did little to mark the progress of time. I spent some time each day in walking about with my wife. At times our hostess accompanied us and introduced us to those of her friends who found us in the same pursuit. In the end I concluded that I needed to take a more active part in all our pursuits. I had attended endless meetings at which the inspector was a



worthy advocate. I could not bear to think that my willingness to surrender a profession I loved had been in vain. I chose to believe that all I wanted in being an inspiration to the young would come to be, and I was impatient with all else. In time I prevailed, but I had not come close to my ultimate goal.

**Friday, 8/28/98 7:25PM**

I had not anticipated the technicalities involved in accepting a position that needed approval of endless committees and endless officials. At no point did I doubt the good intentions of the inspector, but I had cause at times to question his power. Never did he hesitate or compromise in his assurance that I would in the end be able to do exactly what both of us wished me to do.

I think had I known of the obstacles in the way I might have reconsidered accepting the inspector's invitation, but as time went on I grew in trust and faith that his single mindedness would in the end dispel all doubts and that our venture would find the success that for so long seemed

elusive. I confess my naivete. As a simple school master I had been head in my kingdom. My classroom was mine in all ways, provided that I satisfied the minimum needs incumbent in my students' achievement in all that was educationally basic. The fact that I went far beyond minimum requirements was at all times my decision. I was not in any way controlled. My students were happy. Their parents were happy. I was happy. Each year an inspector would arrive, make a cursory examination of me and my students and report that I was "satisfactory." Not until this particular inspector had I met anyone even faintly interested in education as it ought to be.

I was naive, I must admit, in thinking that I would be accepted by higher officials simply on the inspector's recommendation. I was naive to think that a concept so bold as experimental education of young teachers would pass muster in a bureaucracy set in its ways. I expected speed in decision making. What I found was endless and repetitive discussion.

Had it not been for Rose and for the disruption I had already caused in our lives, I might have

been tempted to surrender the dream, but each time I began to show signs of discouragement and doubt, the tenacity and optimism of my friend gave me renewed faith.

## **Saturday, 8/29/98 3:04PM**

The very next morning after our arrival I awakened early, for I knew that it would be my first day of learning in the school of music. After breakfast my father told me that Mrs. Estes' driver would take me to the school and would come for me at the end of the morning. I was a little fearful of going without anyone to stay with me, but I did not say so. I knew I had to learn to be self sufficient. I was not entirely sure what that meant.

After a short drive we came to a brick building, a building that was not as large or as grand as I expected it to be. The driver walked to the door with me and rang a bell. Almost instantly the door opened and a pleasant faced woman in a long plain black dress greeted us. The driver touched his cap and spoke briefly to the lady.

She nodded and turned to me as he left. I watched her lips anxiously. "So you are Rose. Welcome to our school. I am Clara."

I smiled in relief at understanding her and curt-sied. She took my hand and led me to to a long corridor, lined on both sides by doors with windows in them. As we walked I could see people, mostly young, playing a variety of instruments. We turned a corner and I saw another similar corridor. In the larger of the rooms I saw pianos, and at the very end of this corridor Clara opened the door and gestured that I should enter.

I did so and stood just inside the door uncertain of what was expected of me. Clara gently removed from my grasp the portfolio of music I had been told to bring and took my cloak and hung it on a hook by the door. Then she took a piece of music from the pile next to the piano and placed it on the holder. She took my hand and placed it on the piano. Then she told me to watch her hands. As she played I was reminded of the countless times I had done just this with my mother and I could not help smiling.

When my teacher, for that is what I assumed

Clara was, finished she rose from the bench and gestured for me to take her place. I watched her lips once more. "Now you," she said, and pointed to the start of the piece. I was not familiar with the music, but it was simple and I was sure I had acquitted myself when I finished. Clara did too, I think, for she nodded her approval and from the pile drew another composition. We repeated our performance, she first, then me, with the same result three or four times, each choice growing in complexity.

Next, she played without musical score and very briefly. She stood and asked me to play from memory. This again I had done many times with my mother and I found it simple, even when she played for longer and longer. Finally she laughed and seized my hands and opened them. I may have imagined it, but I thought that tears welled in her eyes as she gazed at my hands. I watched her lips. "Wonderful," she said, "Miraculous."

Then Clara gestured toward my portfolio as if asking permission to open it. I nodded approval and watched as she examined all I had chosen to bring with me -- my favorites and some of my own compositions. She chose one of the latter

and sat again to play, this time indicating that she would like me to sit beside her. After she had finished she handed me my portfolio and I knew it was my turn to choose. Feeling very confident by this time, I chose one of the most complex compositions, one I had written very recently. Again, when I finished her face was aglow and she shook her head in wonder.

By now it was almost time for me to leave, and Clara asked if I would like a cup of tea before departing. We went to a small parlor, pleasantly decorated, with a piano in one corner, and I wished desperately at that moment that I dared to try speech, but I feared making a fool of myself and I did not, but with a great surge of hope I realized that the very next day I would begin my learning in the school of speech.

## **5:20PM**

I took great delight in Rose's happiness. Each day she seemed to grow in confidence, and each day her skills seemed to increase. Mrs. Estes was the most generous of women and she claimed

when I protested at our taking too much that she was more than repaid by the pleasure she experienced in sharing Rose's joy and in the quiet companionship and shared love of music that my wife provided.

Eventually all our lives fell into a pleasant pattern. Rose was totally involved in her schooling in music and in her progress in learning to communicate verbally. She was still very shy and reluctant to speak, but day after day with all the loving encouragement she received from all of us who both loved and admired her, she grew in confidence. She grew less tentative and less embarrassed with each successful communication.

As for my dream, it began to be real. After what seemed an excess of discussion I was granted quarters in the main building where the bureaucracy of educational services was housed. It was agreed that to start with I would limit my class to twenty would-be teachers to be selected at my direction from those who aspired to enter the profession but had not found employment. Most were city children who had had some exposure to the cultural arts, and I found in them a surprising level of knowledge and sophistication.

Nevertheless their need to learn more about the teaching of the young was apparent both to them and to me. Therefore they came to me with both a hunger to learn and a willingness to work. For both I was grateful.

It was further agreed that with the cooperation of school authorities I would be allowed to use certain classrooms as a continuing workshop using the new found abilities of my students to instruct. In this way our influence was immediately extended and our learning reinforced by experience.

In all I was almost totally gratified. I say "almost" because I hoped for a wider audience than my twenty students, worthy and worthwhile as they were, but I realized that I needed to be patient. There were many in authority who needed to be persuaded of the worth of my efforts. I was determined to persuade them, and to this end began a journal of accomplishments listed, and I asked my students to do the same. They agreed readily, and I knew that I had the beginnings of a report that would persuade the most skeptical. I was pleased with all that lay ahead. (6:04)



**Sunday, 8/30/98 4:35PM**

When I look back on all I learned in loving hands in the school of hearing and speech I feel great gratitude.

"Hearing" may be a strange word to use, but indeed my capacity to "hear" through my eyes grew enormously. I spent endless hours, week after week, learning to distinguish sound through reading lips. I learned to recognize strange words, strange accents, difficult speech patterns. I learned to hear speech more rapid than I could earlier imagine understanding. In all of this learning I was encourage by loving teachers whose infinite patience inspired me to believe in myself fully. Each victory of mine was a victory of theirs.

Even more significant than learning to hear was learning to speak. With my father I had conquered a few sounds, but I was totally unable to convey more than a few simple words through speaking. At first even with skilled instruction I feared that I was not capable of more, but I was not allowed to consider failure. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, I would sit with

one or another of my teachers with my fingers on her throat sensing the vibrations of her speech. In turn I would try to duplicate these vibrations knowing the word or words spoken. There was a large chart on the wall listing sounds and words in order of difficulty, and my eyes were glued to the word or sound we were working on. Next I watched my teacher's lips as she spoke the same word or sound.

At the start I was close to despair, but I knew that if it took forever I could not give up. To encourage me I was early taught useful words and phrases --"please", "thank you", "hello", "good-bye," and expected to use them at every opportunity. Sometimes I would be matched with another student in these exercises and it was good for me to learn that I was not alone in my discouragement and frustration, but I also learned that I was not alone in my triumphs, large and small.

I spent more time working on speech than I did on my music, for my needs were greater in this effort. Gradually I dared take part in dinner conversations, and although I failed often in clear communication I treasured my triumphs. My joy

in achievement was always shared fully by those I loved, first of all my father and mother, but also Mrs. Estes, who was like a second mother to me, and the inspector, whose interest and enthusiasm never flagged. I was blessed in all ways.

## **Monday, 8/31/98 7:33PM**

Despite the wondrous changes in both Rose's and my lives, my dear wife began to regret being away from home. She knew pleasurable companionship in the company of Mrs. Estes, whom she now called Helen as a measure of their intimacy, but still she longed to be useful. She missed tending to the needs of her older children and their little ones. Yet she could not bear the thought of living apart from Rose and me. She was torn in her affections and her loyalties, and I could not help her. I did not want her to leave, but I felt cruel in detaining her. Rose's need for her was less than mine, for she was totally preoccupied with her studies and had made some friends. I fear I contributed to my wife's loneliness for I often worked well into the evening, often missing dinner time.

I was torn too. My love for my wife was steadfast, Yet I could not bring myself to abandon a venture fraught with excitement and promise. We spoke often of our dilemma, each of us reluctant to hurt the other with our demands. Finally we agreed that the answer was for my wife to take temporary leave of Rose and me, to return to our home for a visit as long as she wished and to return to the city only when she felt that it was wise to do so.

I felt some trepidation about this proposal. Never had we been apart since our marriage. Never had Rose not known the sweet support of her mother. Yet an end to my wife's unhappiness was essential, and almost before we could adjust to the idea, she was gone, tearful and promising to return soon. We did not suggest to Rose that this was anything but a well earned vacation, a return to those who longed for her caring and her company. It was with a heavy heart that I saw the train disappear down the tracks, and I wondered, though only for a moment, if I had made the wrong choice. (7:12)

**Tuesday, 9/1/98 6:40PM**

Within a matter of weeks I had made progress in both my music and my speech that I would have thought impossible at an earlier time. I think I came close to obsession in my determination to succeed, and I was blessed beyond my wildest hopes with a great new opportunity. I was invited to enroll in the school of music as a candidate for a diploma. I was further blessed by an anonymous benefactor who had been told of my unusual talent and who offered to pay all my school expenses.

I was troubled by the concept of accepting a stranger's charity, and turned to my father for advice. He in turn suggested I speak to our dear friend the inspector, who could offer me more informed advice. Mr. Forester had, it turned out, heard of the offer to pay for my schooling. Later I was to suspect that he was instrumental in arranging it, but at the time I had no such suspicion. The inspector explained that it was not at all unusual for the well-to-do to benefit young scholars in a variety of ways, and that most of these generous souls preferred to remain anony-

mous. Their pleasure was in the giving and knowing that their money was well spent. He urged me to accept. I did so and began a rigorous schedule of studies. I was finding speech easier and easier, though I knew I was far from totally pleasing to the ear, but I was generally intelligible. Consequently I was able to switch the emphasis in my study time and spend more hours than I had theretofore on my music.

I learned so much so fast. I was taught musical theory. I was taught the history of music. I learned the works of the great composers. I learned advanced composition. This last I enjoyed the most. I found great satisfaction in the exercises when I learned to write on command music of a special type -- a march, a ballet suite, a tone poem, a folk song, to mention a few. Some of my efforts were more successful than others. I am sure that some were quite dismal, but in all I exceeded my own expectations and, I think, the expectations of others.

At all times both my father and the inspector were sources of encouragement and appreciation. Life would have been very different without them. Mrs. Estes was a wonder to me in her

generosity and devotion, and she became with the departure of my own mother even more of a second mother to me. (6:57)

### **Wednesday, 9/2/98 11:40PM**

It surprised me, in retrospect, how invisibly the weeks became months and the months became years. Never was the sweet and perfect love we knew as a family vanquished by all the changes demanded of us in so many ways. After the departure of our wife and mother, Rose and I were increasingly dependent upon each other for the emotional support we had always known without calling it by that name. We were both completely devoted to the work we held dear, and while we had little in common in our separate lives, we held dear all that we knew of love perfect in its giving and receiving.

It was a constant joy to hear of my Rose's happiness in her new life. Each of her triumphs, and there were many, lighted my life and gave it new meaning. In turn, Rose hungered to hear of all that brightened my life, and at times she seemed

almost to relive my experiences as I related them to her, for by now our communication was miraculously complete. There is little more I could have asked for my child in her new life. She progressed steadily in her musical studies and I was told more than once that she was an inspiration to many.

As for myself, I knew both triumph and failure. I comfort myself, also in retrospect, that the triumphs outweighed the tragedies by a great margin. My original twenty students were all I could have asked in talent and in application and they were a treasure to me, for wherever they went, whenever they spoke, people learned of new approach to the education of the young. In time my original students became apostles carrying my message into classrooms near and far, and in time I knew the complete satisfaction I had dreamed of from the very beginning.

None of my success could have been possible had it not been for my staunchest supporter, the inspector, my friend and ally, nor could I have lived comfortably had it not been for the gracious hospitality and endless giving of Mrs. Estes, whom I too now called Helen.



Our dear wife and mother felt comfortable in sharing herself. Some of the time, particularly when she was needed for one reason or another, she stayed in our old home or with one or another of her other children. When she felt free and able, she returned to the city to Rose and to me and to her dear friend Helen who missed her when she was away. (11:56)

**Thursday, 9/3/98 11:04PM**

In all that transpired in Rose's life I saw a divine hand, guiding her, guiding me and her mother, guiding all those drawn to her in total love. She was, I came to believe, sent to us to teach us the wonder of love, its totally transforming quality. From the moment she was born, Rose was a special soul, and as she grew she grew in beauty. I speak here not of physical beauty but of the incandescence of the soul within.

When we learned that our darling child had been deprived of a sense considered essential, we looked upon it as a blessing, a chance to express our love of our dear one without regard to

reward in ordinary ways. When she first failed as an infant to respond to our words it was a tragedy for us. When we learned her inner beauty it was a triumph to overcome all tragedies.

So Rose was from the start a lesson in love for us all. What we gave to her was returned tenfold. I speak with certainty here of and for all those whose lives Rose touched. I speak particularly of those who loved and encouraged her through the years when she found her true mission in life, when she learned of her amazing capacity to help those born with the same affliction to a life beyond helplessness. I cannot say with certainty how happy my dear child would have found herself in ordinary existence, an existence that was in any case denied her from birth. but I know that she found ultimate happiness in benefiting from her affliction, from triumphing over all limitations, and in sharing all she had learned and all she had achieved with those in need of her talented devotion.

As an old man I looked back upon my life and regretted not a moment. I hope that my Rose will find herself years from now sharing this

content. I know she will.

## **Friday. 9/4/98 9:50PM**

Years later, when it became important for me to remember, I summoned moments half forgotten that I knew I should never totally forget. One of the pictures that came to me was entering the room and finding my mother and Mrs. Estes playing together on the piano. They were playing a piece, joyful and demanding in its execution, and in each other they found great joy. I stood behind them following their fingers as they progressed and I shared their joy. I remember too the day that Clara opened the door to a new world to me, a world of inspiration and challenge and total gratification. I never sit down to play that I do not remember that day. One of my most joyous times was when I knew the ultimate satisfaction of teaching another, of conveying to her the same hopes and uncertainties I had known at the start of my schooling.

Above all, as this was not a moment but a constant, a continuum, was the love I knew first

from my father, then from so many others, my mother always chief among the rest. I should not neglect to mention the miracle I knew when I first played in an ensemble. I could not hear, but I knew the joy I read in each face. Finally, although there never really is "finally," I will never forget the joy I knew in finding a love I never dreamed possible and pursuing with him a life of love and giving, an existence ideal in all ways. We loved together, we taught together, we thought together. He was all to me and I to him, and in all of my happiness I knew the total sharing of love given and received by so many. The inspector never left our lives, nor did Mrs. Estes, whom I finally brought myself to call "Aunt Helen," though it seemed an improper intimacy, but I learned to love the address.

Always my father, who achieved a fame less grand than it should have been for his innovative ideas and inspired leadership, found gratification in his life and in mine. I missed him when he left this life, and my mother, in total devotion, followed him shortly after, and her absence added to my loneliness for those held dear for so long. Yet I knew that we were apart only for a little

while, and always when I sat down to play, I knew that my father stood behind me. At times I was sure I felt the gentle pressure of his hand on my shoulder. (10:10)



