

Sheila and I first met at the dog run in Westmount, so early in the morning that the dogs were shadows playing around our legs. My first recollection of anything beyond early morning mutterings was when Sheila held herself apart from the rest of us, leaning over the fence with Seamus at her side, staring into space.

I went over to her. Her mother had died, she said. After telling her how sorry I was, I confided that my dad had died when I was only 31, and I knew how it felt to be orphaned. Sheila gave me a watery smile and I touched her hand. It was the birth of a friendship.

Images like these hold memories in place and my images of Sheila are as rich and variegated as Sheila herself.

Sheila and Mark: Mark chugging across the lake to meet his lady love ... Sheila christening a get together of friends with humour and grace ... Her love of reading: Sheila would curl up with a book and you could almost hear her building the text -- there were smiles, the curling of a lip, a slow, rhythmic twisting of a lock of hair, a groan, a clicking of teeth...Her intensity: Sheila dove into discussions as though they were pools of possibility. Yet, no matter how polar-opposite the views expressed by others to her own, Sheila was in it for the exchange of minds ...How the animals, especially Seamus, accompanied her like old souls --- lying at her feet or carrying her over the slopes of La Minerve on their broad backs...

Sheila, my friend, you lived with a hunger to know as much as you could know, a desire to inhabit each experience fully and a hope that the world could be taught to become a community.

I think that you understood that you couldn't learn and experience everything. And that transforming the world might take more than one lifetime. But that never stopped you.

Abigail Anderson
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