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Hi everyone, and thank you for being here to celebrate Ellie—our Eleanor Grace Parker, born July 22, 1985, gone far too soon at 40, but somehow still managing to fill this room with her light.

I’m speaking as her closest friend from college. We shared apartments with leaky sinks, road trips with worse playlists, and just about every milestone you can trip over and still laugh about later.

Ellie grew up in Portland, carried that rain-washed green of home with her to UCLA, and turned her love of color and people into a degree in graphic design. She didn’t just build a career—she founded a boutique studio that made bold, compassionate campaigns. If you ever wondered what kindness looks like in Pantone, Ellie could show you. And in the most Ellie way, her studio has already set up a scholarship in her name for young women in design. That’s not just legacy—that’s an open door with her handwritten “come on in” taped to it.

She was radiantly kind and relentlessly adventurous, the kind of generous that shows up on moving day with snacks and labels, and the kind of honest that somehow told you the truth without making your shoulders tense. If you knew her, you remember the camera always at the ready, how she’d catch a grin mid-bloom and send it back to you so you could see what she saw in you.

My favorite memory? One sunrise in Yosemite after an all-night drive. We stumbled out of the car, hair feral, eyes sandpaper. Ellie brewed truly terrible campsite coffee—so bad we laughed until we cried. Then the granite caught fire with light, and she lifted her camera and whispered, “Hold on, this is the good part.” That was her thesis on life: wait for the good part, and help it along if you can.

She was spiritual in the way quiet rivers are—gratitude journaling on the couch,

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weekly nature walks as meditation, noticing the small things until they felt big enough to be holy. She hiked, chased street corners with her lens, painted soft watercolors that somehow carried loud joy, and she was a champion of adopt-don’t-shop animal rescue. There’s probably a dog somewhere today wondering where the pocket treats went.

Ellie loved fiercely. Michael and Ruth, she adored being your daughter. Daniel, she bragged about you more than you’ll ever be comfortable with. And to her two nieces—she kept photos of your art on her phone like they were museum pieces.

What we’ll miss most are her spontaneous weekend texts—“Pack a hoodie, trust me”—and the way loyalty felt like a warm coat she draped over your shoulders without asking.

So how do we honor someone who kept finding the good part? We can start small and keep going. Take a nature walk and write three honest lines of gratitude. Tell a friend the truth with kindness. Notice light on a sidewalk and take the photo. Support a young woman with a risky, beautiful idea. Rescue the dog no one else has chosen yet.

Ellie didn’t need a monument. She built moving ones—campaigns that helped people, pictures that lifted chins, friendships that held.

Today we say goodbye, but not to her momentum. That keeps going—in her family’s love, in the studio she made brave, in that scholarship with her name on it, and in every one of us who learned, with Ellie, to wait for the good part and, if possible, to make it.

We love you, Ellie. Thank you for the laughter, the honesty, the terrible coffee, and the perfect timing. We’ll take it from here.

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