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Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for being here to honor my mother, Evelyn Grace Porter—our Evie.

She was born on August 21, 1944, and she left us peacefully at 79.
It feels strange to say “left,” because so much of her remains—on our bookshelves, in our gardens, in the notes tucked in drawers and recipe boxes, and in the way we speak more softly when someone needs to be heard.

Evie grew up in Vermont, where the hills taught her to love quiet places and the seasons taught her patience.
She studied literature and never stopped being fascinated by how words could comfort and connect us.
For decades she was a librarian—eventually head librarian—who believed every child deserved a safe place to sit and dream.
She championed children’s reading programs and community book clubs, building a home for readers of every age and every story.

She was widowed too early, yet she kept choosing joy—gentle joy, the kind that sneaks in like morning light.
She raised two daughters who always knew where to find her: at the reference desk, in the garden, or by the lake, where she retired to a small cottage with a view that matched her soul—open, steady, and full of birdsong.
As an aunt and a neighbor she had an uncanny way of showing up at exactly the right time, teacup in one hand and an extra sweater in the other.
She leaves behind four grandchildren who knew her scones, her porch swing invitations, and her habit of pressing a hand to your cheek when you needed courage.

Mom was the warmest listener I’ve ever known—attentive in a way that made

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you feel like you were the only person in the room.
She was witty too, with a humor that never stung, only soothed.
Gentle, yes, but fiercely loyal to family and friends.
If she loved you, you belonged to the most steadfast circle on earth.

In her final years, I was her closest companion, and it was the greatest honor of my life.
My favorite memory is simple: dusk on the porch swing, a book between us, and Mom humming old folk songs under her breath as the sky turned lavender.
The pages blurred, and the humming did the reading for me.
I still hear that tune when the day softens.

She found her faith in quiet prayer and in the rhythms of nature—sun on the water, wind moving through birch leaves, the steady choreography of the seasons.
She didn’t talk much about beliefs; she lived them in patience, kindness, and the daily practice of noticing.
“Light a candle and let the love do the rest,” she used to say.
It was her way of trusting that small acts carry farther than we think.

There are so many small acts I will miss:
Her soft laugh from the kitchen, drifting out like a welcome.
Her handwritten notes tucked into lunch bags—tiny letters that said, “I see you,” and somehow also, “You can do hard things.”
The watercolor cards left on neighbors’ steps after a rough week.
The way she knew the names of birds—and the names of librarians’ kids, and the kids’ favorite books, and which scone you’d reach for first.

She loved the ordinary arts: gardening, birdwatching, watercolor painting, baking scones that tasted like home.
But she also loved the art of people.
If you ever sat with her in the library, or on that porch, you learned that to be seen is a kind of miracle.
And if you joined one of her book clubs, you learned that stories make room for

us all.

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Today we grieve—of course we do.
But I think she would want us to notice what continues:
The grandchildren turning pages at bedtime.
A neighbor starting a new garden, because Evie once pressed a packet of seeds into her hand.
A child discovering a library card is a key.
Her daughters—both of us—choosing kindness first, because we were taught by example.

She didn’t measure a life in years, or even in chapters.
She measured it in the love you could carry forward.
So we’ll carry it—in the porch-swing twilights, in the laughter we share, in the notes we write to each other when the day is hard.
We’ll keep lighting candles, trusting that the love will indeed do the rest.

Thank you, Mom, for the books, the songs, the scones, and the fierce, gentle loyalty that steadied us.
Thank you for making room for us to be fully ourselves.

We love you, Evie.
We’ll keep your seat by the window, your watering can by the door, and your favorite line in our hearts.

Light a candle—and let the love do the rest.

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