

Part III

~

HEAR OUR FRIENDS

"I will miss her the rest of my life."

Sandra Allen

Elizabeth Orton Jones

TWO STORIES FROM MASON

The Marie Tree

Far, far away, so the children say,
By the shore of Fondmemory Sea,
In the blowing wind, with roots in the sand,
You will find an incredible tree.

* * *

On the face of each leaf is written a word,
All neatly and carefully done.
On the back side of each is a girl's or boy's name,
Quite legible, every one.

* * *

There's a Margot, a Mathew, a Kristen, a Jon,
a Jackie, a Jennie, a Jesse, a Flor,
Two Saras, a Daniel, a Jason, a Mark,
Terrili, David, William, and more...

* * *

"Who could have planted this tree?" you ask
The children of Mason School.
"We did!" they answer, right away.
"And we think it's mighty cool!"

* * *

You ask them what species of tree it is,
Whether real or a fantasy.
"Oh, it's real," the boys and girls declare.
"It's a realer-than-real kind of tree!"

* * *

"So how is it catalogued?" you inquire.
And a small, solemn boy recites:
"Masonia McCaffeteria--
Protected by rare-species rights!"

Marie [McCaffery] was the most beloved teacher the Mason School ever had, and I taught with her for years. That winter term after her death the mourning amongst the children, especially those who had been in her room, was so poignant that I went in every few days for activities in remembrance of her. We did a great many things, most especially the Marie Tree. We had it at the memorial service that spring, covered like a Christmas tree with ornaments made by the children. The tree is still in her house where her own kids and sisters still come from time to time.