

## A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF E. CAITLIN PHILLIPS

[Thanks to Caitlin's sister, Ashley E. Phillips, her niece, Emersen Elisabeth Phillips, her family, and special thanks to MC Jodi Roberts for hosting a lovely celebration of Caitlin's life. Ashley wrote on her Facebook page: August 3 at 8:10pm · “ After a beautiful celebration of life for E Caitlin Phillips, attended by over 70 people and beautifully coordinated by Jodi Roberts and James Kelly, Emersen Elisabeth Phillips and I are close to home and getting some sustenance with flowers from the service at our side — at Firefly Grill and Wine Bar. “]

How does one measure a personal loss or quantify friendship? I have no idea how to determine these things. All I can relate is personal experience. When I heard that Caitlin had died only weeks after I learned of her diagnosis of leukemia, and her scheduled chemo treatment, I was shocked, saddened, and experienced the physical pain of her loss. I felt like I had gotten a powerful punch in the solar plexis. I was miserable for a week, and I didn't open my eyes without remembering the loss of my dear friend.

Now, I know that I wasn't her closest friend. I wasn't a member of her family, we'd never been lovers or house mates, and many people had known her longer and spent more time with her. I cannot fathom their loss. To Caitlin's family and friends, especially those who could not make it to the memorial, I offer you all my condolences for your loss.

In fact, I hadn't seen Caitlin in person since Christmas, although I kept in touch on Facebook. Still, friendships have a way of weaving themselves into the tapestry of our lives. We are entwined by common events, memories, random comments, kindnesses, mundane routines, and the festive gatherings. We wear the cloth of friendship as protection to shield us from the daily “slings and arrows” of living, and we treasure our friends as the joyful, colorful garments that decorate our lives. Friends give us context, and help shape the world we experience. Even over time and distance we carry them with us in memory and consciousness. Friends may not share our DNA, but they are part of the electricity that sparks in our brains. With powerful connections, we often experience the feeling of no intrim of time having passed since the last time we saw each other. This was how many of us felt with Caitlin.

Personally, I want to express my gratitude for the kindness, fun, intelligence, wit, strength, common sense, beauty, joy, wild humor, love and more that she contributed to my life. She is with us in the synapses and feelings that all share. I can hear her laugh as I type this. Keep dancing my friend, we will meet again. Love and hugs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zdkQxXyOcc&feature=youtu.be>

Published on Aug 3, 2014, Memorial video made by me, her niece Emersen. The song is called “Do You Realize” by The Flaming Lips.

<https://www.facebook.com/ecaitlin.phillips?fref=ts>

Kevin McGrath