

*A letter to Karen found among her possessions.*

Karen Hudson,

Our friend and mentor, an artist of the soul who touched our lives for many years. A leader and guide who watered and fed us, let us grow, and watched us soar. We remember your kindness, your freedom, the unconstructed range of your expression. A Kansas girl who roamed the downtown streets of a mean city, finding tenderness there. We saw it too, through you.

We remember your photographs, images of age and living hard. Lowriders, unlovely culture, beyond our suburban, ordered, sense of beauty. You stretched us.

Your art, found treasures, pieces coming together in their own time.

There is a lightness to your vision. You see what others miss. Gentle humor, a sharing, crediting, style of empowerment. Gracious and compassionate, welcoming, including everyone. Creating community. No winners, no losers, simply potential. You brought out the best in everyone. Baring your soul. Looking beyond costumes,

images, defined personas. We bared our souls too and look what it brought.

You evolved a loyal band of people who have seen one another's hearts. You brought things to light that might have remained in darkness, hidden, untapped, unexplored, unloved. You showed us the heart's humanity, how much people can care, how much commonality we all share.

Parallel visions, synchronicity. There's something about your group that's different, very different. People remark on it, feel it, sense it in the air. "What is it, they say?"

You inspired us and we became inspirational. You set the tone and that tone resonated, sounded, through each one of us. Sympathetic vibration. We ring with your tone. The tone of the heart, discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary. We became extraordinary. Your gifts to us live on and on.

Thank you, Karen Hudson.

You were a dream we never knew we had.