

## About Jordan – by Friend, Graeme Magor

You know how when something is very much front and centre in your world, many things you hear and things you read seem to shine a beam onto that something. A certain song, for example, may say exactly how you feel about an affair of the heart, couldn't have put it better into words yourself. I had that kind of experience driving back from a business meeting in Muskoka this past Thursday. I was thinking of Jordan, the incalculable loss, the unanswerable why, and a CBC program came on the radio – a rerun of a Tapestry show, I believe. Apparently when the Russian novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn gave his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for Literature in the 1970's, he said his greatest inspiration was his literary predecessor Dostoevsky – and to him Dostoevsky's greatest and most inspired quote was "Beauty will save the world". This statement, which seemed banal and perhaps shallow to Solzhenitsyn (who had known decades of incarceration, without beauty) when he first encountered it, grew on him tremendously – and it does me as well in the context of what's happened this week. There are so many levels on which this can be understood. In the big picture, neither war nor money will certainly ever save the world (When will they ever learn in song coming to mind) and we could do a lot worse than to let beauty have a shot at it. But see also how beauty can inspire and take us out of ourselves. To the extent that we can see and feel the beauty in others, there is hope for us all, hope that we can rise above our own immediate needs and desires. Then there is hope (justice, peace, sustainability) for the world.

Although, like some others writing here, I only met Jordan briefly once or twice and in passing, I did not need to know her to know her beauty. It's been all around us this week and it was there in words and song at her celebration on Saturday. I was going to say that this beauty is infectious but that's not really the right word. I think infectious implies a passive spread, that we can receive beauty by being in its glow. I don't think it works that way. Like keeping and growing an enduring relationship, seeing the beauty takes work. Seeing the beauty in others around us is very much a stretch sometimes – for our reasons and for theirs. But it's at times like these and with people like Jordan whom we've been privileged to know (or know people who knew her, which amounts to almost the same thing, so it seems this week) that beauty is so clear, so undeniable, and transcends everything else. It can't help but inspire us to see the beauty and the good around and within us, and to work to do so when the beauty seems buried. Thank you for this gift, Jordan. You live on.