

The Night Before

The night before, Sylvia,
You came through the door glowing with life.
You had your hair fixed a new way,
With your beautiful tresses unbound and falling to your shoulders.
Looking at you the night before
I realized that you were no longer the little girl I had known for so long.
You were now a bright, intelligent young woman.
The night before
We talked happily about your summer plans
About whether you would take a driver education course
Or a finance course this summer.
We also talked about your busy music schedule,
Filled with practices and performances with your quintet
And with Waukegan municipal band summer concerts on Lake Michigan
Concerts we hoped we'd be able to attend at least once or twice.
The night before
You also talked excitedly about the two weeks
You planned to spend in Maine this summer,
Swimming every day in Lake Damariscotta
Eating ice cream at the Jefferson Scoop
Looking for baby crabs on Martin's Point
And building sandcastles at Pemaquid Beach
With your sister and your cousins.
The night before
I also gave you, an avid cat lover,
Two little Murano glass cats I'd recently bought for you in Venice
As well as a little magnet with a picture of a nun feeding cats
And I pulled up on my phone a photograph I'd taken of the actual painting
On a majolica tile in the Cloister of Santa Chiara in Naples.
And I told you how I hoped you'd be able to visit that cloister for yourself
Someday.

All that was the night before.

The night after
There was no longer a bright, intelligent, beautiful young woman
To walk through the door.
The night after
There were no longer any summer courses to take
Or quintet performances
Or concerts on Lake Michigan.
The night after
There was no longer to be a trip to Maine,
No swimming in Lake Damariscotta
Or ice cream at the Jefferson Scoop.
No crab hunting at Martin's Point
Or sandcastles built at Pemaquid Beach.
The night after
There would never be a trip to Naples to see the Cloister of Santa Chiara.

The night after
Will see no more nights before.
There will only be the night after.

There will only be memories.

In Loving Memory of **Sylvia Marie Bond**



2010 - 2026



Sylvia's grandfather, Tom Sienkewicz, composed "The Night Before" to read at her Memorial on Saturday, August 30, 2026, in Mundelein, Illinois.