Chère Nela,

Voir la lettre dont j'ai parlé à matin au téléphone.

C'est mon âge. Sela m'a fait de la peine surtout quand j'ai vu le mien.

Tendresse

Diane

3 IV 95
Dear Friends,

After a long and extraordinary life, Felicia Zofia Lilpop Krance died at 1:57 p.m. on May 4, 1993, after a very brief illness. Just two days earlier, she had gone to church with me and my husband Steve and son Casimir, glorying in the crisp spring day and bursting blossoms as we drove to downtown Chicago. That afternoon, she attended a gospel concert and had supper with her eldest son, Charles. The previous afternoon, I had taken a short run from my home to hers, just a half-mile; I found her sitting outside in the sun, alternating between reading a book on spirituality by Nikos Kazantzakis and gazing blissfully across the lovely lawn of her residence at a bed of white and yellow tulips.

In spite of the increasing physical discomforts and burdens that came with age (and about which she almost never spoke, much less complained), her calendar was full of plans—yoga classes, exhibitions and films to see, concerts and radio broadcasts to hear, trips to take, friends and family to visit, meetings to attend, articles to write, lectures to give, and so on. She accepted the inevitability of her mortality, and worked hard to maintain the delicate balance of her health, but she fully intended to keep on living joyously and confidently, and doing all that she could at full speed until she couldn't anymore.

And fortunately, that is just what she did. She was very ill for only about 36 hours, and then she died quietly, cognizant until the very end that her loved ones were with her. On May 29, the day before what would have been her eighty-fifth birthday, she was buried next to her husband, Casimir, in Lake Placid, New York.

On her final day with us we played the recording of his 1960 Chopin recital, and also the recording of a Mozart rondo that she had played for him as he lay dying, 20 years ago, which she described as sounding like the soul's journey away from the body and towards heaven. When Steve gently told her that she was dying, she shrugged slightly, and spoke her last words: "I am full of hope."
She touched and influenced hundreds (if not thousands) of people in several countries through the course of her life, and few could resist the charms of her friendship and intelligence. "She was a woman who made a difference," wrote Miriam Hinderacker Hesse, a longtime friend of Fela’s from Oshkosh. "Her efforts in the cultural and artistic world in this area enriched my life and so many others, and I know this happened wherever she was."

Although we wish that she would have lived a few years longer, as she was so happy with her new life in Chicago, we are left more with wonderful memories and a sense of sweet-sad longing than with grief. We do miss the frequent pleasure of her company and her phone calls, of course, and we know that we will miss her more as more time passes, as her absence becomes longer than the span of all her previous travels.

We also know, however, that we have, and will always have, a strong and reassuring sense of her presence in so many of the things she loved—the beauty of the natural world, the power of music and art and literature (including her own paintings and writings), the pleasures of good food and drink, and the joy and contentment of good company, within the family and far beyond.

Magda Krance
825 W. Gunnison Street
Chicago, IL 60640
312-275-8833

A memorial has been established at:
The Committee for the Blind of Poland
Box 412, Gracie Station
New York, NY 10028