I often feel that death is not the enemy of life, but its friend; for it is the knowledge that our years are limited which makes them so precious. It is the truth that time is but lent to us which makes us, at our best, look upon our years as a trust handed into our temporary keeping.

We are like children privileged to spend a day in a great park, a park filled with many gardens and playgrounds, and azure-tinted lakes and boats sailing upon tranquil waves.

True, the day allotted to each of us is not the same in length, in light, in beauty. Some children of earth are privileged to spend a long and sunlit day in the garden of the earth. For others, the day is shorter, cloudier, and dusk descends more quickly as in a winter’s tale.

But whether our life is a long summery day or a shorter wintry afternoon, we know that inevitably there are storms and squalls which overcast even the bluest heaven and there are sunlit rays which pierce the darkest autumn sky. The day we are privileged to spend in the great park of life is not the same for all human beings; but there is enough beauty and joy and gaiety in the hours, if we but treasure them.

Then for each of us the moment comes when the great nurse, death, takes us by the hand and quietly says, “It is time to go home. Night is coming. It is your bedtime, child of earth. Come, you’re tired. Lie down at last in the quiet nursery of nature and sleep. Sleep well. The day is gone. Stars shine in the canopy of eternity.”

(I hope you will keep this image in mind at the cemetery later today when we do a mitzvah that Sheryl and I strongly believed in. It also comforts me with a picture now of Maggie and Sheryl running towards each other in some beautiful playground somewhere)