

48. Rewarding Experiences

- 1 Reading *Anthem* because I realized I didn't want to be like everyone else (as a sophomore I thought I did).
- 2 Touching a moon rock at the Smithsonian because it was really "out of this world."
- 3 Walking in Rome because Roman men love larger women, and for the first time in my life, the whistles were for me, not for the skinny girls around me.
- 4 Talking with John Lennon in an English pastry shop because I admired him and didn't make a screaming fool of myself (though now I wish I'd gotten his autograph).
- 5 Writing original wedding vows because, first draft, from separate rooms, my husband and I wrote vows that were so nearly identical we seemed psychic.
- 6 Going out to sea on a boat trip in New York harbor because the land disappeared and the world seemed huge and liquid and weirdly metaphysical.
- 7 Awestruck by the simple power of the Vietnam Memorial, I searched for special names and made my own "separate peace" with the memory of the war and its cost.
- 8 Reading the comments Dr. Kendall made on my first graduate paper because I made an "A" and I respected his opinion.
- 9 Taking a tour of the National Art Gallery because the guide taught me how to see and appreciate art (an acquired skill).
- 10 Listening to the Boston Pops, directed by Arthur Fiedler, play the *1812 Overture* on the Bicentennial because for a few minutes I understood what America means to immigrants.
- 11 Standing by the plain graves of John and Robert Kennedy because the dignity of each man survived even tourists snapping photos.
- 12 Reading Katherine Mansfield's short stories for the first time and aching in envy of her incredible skill.