

For Helen

Part 1

by Jill Evans

The years have fled but still my heart skips a beat at the sound of her laughter, melts as the strains of "Hey Jude" swirl around my head. I remember.

Michaelmas Day, 1968, Quick, she's early. Born on the Sabbath, child of St Michael, lulled by the swish of wimples, clatter of boots, serenaded by Lennon and McCartney the stars aligned, Libra ascended, the earth turned on its axis and I gazed at that tiny face for the very first time.

Who sprinkled her with gold-dust?

Studded the soles of her feet with quick-silver?

Scattered her sea green eyes with emeralds?

Who knows?

What shall we call her?

Michaela, Mary, Rose, Lily. No, Helen, Princess of Troy and Maria, Gran's name, she'd like that.

Cute, bright as a button, fresh as a daisy, supple as an aspen, always doing, never still, how she'd cling on to Catherine's hand, hang onto her every word. With her dancing feet, lissom limbs, smiling sea green eyes, cut-out Queen, Prima ballerina, the world was her oyster.

Where have they gone those fragments of the past? Like dandy-lion seeds, borne on a fragrant breeze they float and scatter. Shadows flicker and turn on the spindle of life but Who knows what the future holds? Take my hand and reach for the stars.

For Helen

Part 2

by Jill Evans

Up with the lark, bright eyed and bushy tailed, tie straight, hair glistening,
art board ready, off to school.

Then, a swish of academia, froth of veil, sheen of pearls, scent of roses, a
baby's cry, life's rich tapestry unfolding at your feet. I remember as if it were
yesterday.

Now it's your special birthday.

Shout from the chimney potted roof-tops and gossip ridden cottages of the
Warren.

Whisper your secret to the rasping shingle.

Write in gold on a snow white kite and fly it high into the salty air where
gulls wheel and swoop over a turquoise Cornish sea.

Tattoo your name on the Islands crumbling church. Summon the mermaids.
Muster the dolphins.

Hail the bobbing boats from Smeaton's pier and write in letters on
Porthminster's dazzling sand,

"It's my birthday."

Whimsical, loyal, inquisitive, inspirational, Helen, Troy's jewel, child of the
universe at one with Nature, a flower frozen in time, perfect as the day it
was picked.

I salute you and remember.