

To truly appreciate this poem one must know the circumstances. It was written for the funeral of the loss of *****, who was taken in as a foster child and later adopted by my sister and brother in-law. They devoted their whole lives to caring for disabled children that no one else wanted. Unfortunately my sister has since developed some form of dementia and requires the same care they gave to ***** and several other such children. My brother in-law now finds himself well prepared and completely willing to lovingly care for my sister. He is one of my heroes. When it comes to people that are inclined, more so, compelled to take on such monumental feats, they are a rare breed.

***** was virtually helpless and her life expectancy was prolonged by their efforts for several years. She wasn't able to even speak or walk, nor could she feed herself. They had to completely care for her in every imaginable way and they did. But the day finally came and ***** passed away.

Knowing my love for poetry, they asked me to write a poem for her and as you will see, for them. As I quizzed them over the telephone asking for more and more info on their perspective, my brother in law commented that it was Sixteen years, eight months ago that they had taken her in. In that comment, the title was born.

Sixteen years eight months ago, we couldn't have imagined

The you that we would come to know and leave us now, so saddened

As others watched and wondered why we'd make the sacrifice

We welcomed you with open arms into our hearts and lives

You spoke to us so clearly, without uttering a word

We could not help but here the - call to love we heard

To many it would be easy to say seventeen year or so

But for us it will always be - sixteen years, eight months ago

Sixteen years, eight months ago, a child so innocent

Our privilege to watch you grow and share the time we spent

Captured by your radiance, victims of your simple charms

Connected by your very glimpse, protected in our arms

One could say we understood you and you understood us too

You depended on us to do, all the things you couldn't do

You probably never knew it, when you came to us, you know

It's hard to say who needed who, sixteen years, eight months ago

*****, we will miss you, as we're forced to say goodbye

As we're bending down to kiss you, parting smile and tearful eye

We could not have realized, no - none of us could know

The impact you'd have on our lives, sixteen years eight months ago

In loving memory of ***** on behalf of ***** by Doug Bellamy

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