

Hall's Pond: Fifty Years of Still Water and Strong Will

For the Friends of Hall's Pond – 50th Anniversary of the Hall's Pond Sanctuary

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Not big, not loud—just humble and still,
Tucked near the courts, at the base of the hill,
Where willows lean low and the breezes are kind,
A soft green escape from the world left behind.

Yet long before then—before streets had a name,
When the land breathed quiet and no fences came—
It started, of course, as a cedar swamp land,
With peat underfoot and no human hand.

Where herons would visit, and frogs used to hum—
And silence was part of the pond's native drum.
Then time marched along, as it always will do,
And city life crept where the wild once grew.

But Minna Hall saw it through different eyes—
She watched birds in flight cross the gray Boston skies.
She rallied with women in hats stitched with care,
To save the wild birds from hatpins and flair.

They launched a movement...fearless...refined,
To save birds from fashion and humankind.
She dreamed of a future where birds would still sing,
And left us this refuge, this wild offering.

As cities grew denser, and roadways were laid,
Stormwater rushed where the cattails once swayed.
The pond slowly shrank, and the edges grew bare—
It needed a champion. It needed repair.

In the 1970s, some neighbors took note,
And raised their concerns, their shovels, and vote.
The Town bought the land—yes, with passionate clout—
And the Friends of Hall's Pond soon started to sprout.

They weren't seeking glory, just balance and peace,
A space for the bird song; where the traffic might cease.
They raked, and they rallied, with no time to rest,
Fueled by one quiet truth: this pond is our best.

But then came the skeptics—the doubters, the flak—
Who claimed, "It's a swamp! We don't want it back!"
But restoring a pond takes political flair,
And meetings, and memos, and fighting for air.

So back to the drawing board—with stakes raised anew,
A plan to restore Hall's Pond began to take view.
The drainage improved, the storm flows subdued,
And the pond breathed again—revived and renewed.

They united the woods and the pond as one whole,
So walkers and birds could both reach their goal.
A sanctuary stitched from old roots and new beams,
Connected by vision, sweat equity, dreams.

The boardwalk was anchored with helical piers,
A feat that took vision—and quite a few years.
And by 2002, the great work was done—
A wild was reclaimed, and a new age begun.

From Barbara to Betsy, from Lee to the rest,
They gave it their all, and gave it their best.
They honored Miss Albrecht with granite and wings,
A stone angel now watches over seasons and springs.

And fifty years on, what a legacy made:
I've seen children laugh in the willow's green shade.
I've seen lovers strolling and elders at rest,
And one nervous young man, on bended knee, in a tie and a vest.

I've seen people gather in joy, others mourn in sorrow,
Grieving a loved one, unsure of tomorrow.
I've watched someone practice an aria low,
Letting their voice match the breeze as it blows.

Some sit and reflect, while the woodpeckers tap,
And the sounds of the city fall gently to nap.
This place is a balm, a quiet embrace—
A jewel of reflection, a soulful green space.

It's more than a wetland—it's memory and place,
It's healing and heritage, community grace.
A place to reflect, to restore, to belong—
A space where the birds can still sing a song.

And the Friends? Oh, the Friends—you magnificent crew,
With the grit of New England and hearts that are true.
You're the reason this place is still whole.
You rake, and you weed, and you reach for the soul.

You educate neighbors and fundraise with grace,
You care for this pond like a cherished green space.
You've welcomed young students and watched nesting birds—
You've tended with action far louder than words.

So instead of a toast, I offer this rhyme,
To honor your labor, your hearts, and your time.
Let's lift up this space with each step that we take—
It's sacred because of the difference you make.