Summary for Jan. 28, 1986

Dear Students of Concord High School:

It is my turn today to give the summary of the class for January 28, 1986. Each day in our class, one student is responsible for taking notes and then writing a summary of the days events which is read aloud the next day. The rotation came around to me yesterday.

I don't know if it is coincidence or Providence that it was my turn yesterday for I wanted to be on that shuttle flight. I applied last year along with several thousand other teachers. I remember being so excited about having a shot at going into space. It didn't matter if it was a long one. I fully expected to win that honor. I put in scores of hours making out that application. I thought about each application question long and hard. It was the hardest application I had ever had to fill out. I did it because it meant so much to me.

I remember how disappointed I felt when I was not selected. I did not even make it in my state. I was, however, glad for those who did get selected. I followed the newscasts throughout the Spring and Summer and learned that your teacher, Crista McAuliffe, was chosen.

Yesterday, I was preparing for Science. I was attempting to build a spectroscope out of tin foil, cardboard tubes, and cellophane so I could have a model to show the class how it was done so they could make their own. The time was about 8:50 am as I was returning to my room when I met Mr. Humble, our Principal, who told me the tragic news. I dropped everything and wheeled the TV into the room so that my students and I could watch the reports. We did so for about an hour and a half. I then tried to teach science. I shoved a video tape into the VCR but I could not get the machine to work. I called in the Principal to help figure out what the problem was. After several minutes he found a switch hidden in the back of the TV that activated the signal to the VCR. I showed the video on "Light."

All through the morning, I was in a state of shock. I couldn't believe this had happened. I thought I was having a bad dream. It began to sink in after lunch when I once again turned on the TV for more reports on the disaster. I felt frustrated that more information was not available. But seeing those replays convinced me that there was no hope for the crew. They never knew what happened.

I guess the thing that surprizes me now is the people who called me or my wife to see how I was. Coming to school today, two cars flashed their lights at me. I guess people thought about me and realized that if I had been chosen, that would have been

me instead of your teacher. It makes me feel better.

Before class everyday, I commit myself to give everything I have to this task. So often I sense inadaquacy, I sense failure, I sense frustration at doing my best. Perhaps I feel that doing your best can always get better. I admired your teacher, Crista McAuliffe, because I looked at her as someone who was one of the best, who could stimulate and challenge you, whose dedication to you was great, whose desire to inspire you was unparalled. Her commitment to living life to the fullest cost her her life. Because she lived, your life is now richer. Go out and do the same to someone else. Remember what John F. Kennedy said.

I hope I have another opportunity to apply for space flight. More importantly though, I hope you come out of this tragedy stronger, more determined, and dedicated to becoming all that you can become. That would be the greatest tribute you could give to Crista McAuliffe.

Respectfully yours:

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