

Nyani-Iisha Faudel Martin, 1976-2026

Nyani “Ny” Martin of Watertown, Massachusetts, beloved multitalented author, artist, and foodie, died on March 1, 2026, aged 50, after suddenly and unexpectedly falling ill at home.

Ny was born in the Bronx in 1976 to Lennox and Faudel Martin. She attended the Dalton School and Kent School before attending Harvard University, graduating in 1997 with an Bachelor of Science in Biology. As an undergraduate, she was active in the Harvard Radcliffe Science Fiction Association. She was employed at Cambridge Health Alliance.

While she had no children of her own, she was the beloved “adopted auntie” of the children of her former roommates, Josh Sommer and Akiva Sommer, and of her current roommate Sam Kadel, all of whom are reeling at the sudden loss.

She enjoyed numerous hobbies and leisure interests, including cooking; reading and writing transformative fiction; drawing; history, with a particular interest in the civilization of the ancient Minoans; comics; and movies. She was an avid reader and was well known for an extensive, sesquipedalian vocabulary that left many reaching for a dictionary.

She often cooked food to leave in the community fridge in her town. She believed strongly in many social justice causes, particularly reproductive health, LGBTQ+ rights and especially transgender rights, and immigrant rights.

She brought light and joy to others wherever she went, whether it was through cooking for them, handing out small stickers to adults and children everywhere with her art or other special images on them, or sending friends near and far hand drawn postcards and magnets. She will always be remembered for her broad smile that would light up an entire room, and for her deep, loud, full-body laugh.

She is survived by her parents, Lennox and Faudel Martin, of Westchester County, New York; her long-time partners, William Duetschler of Belmont, Massachusetts and Joshua Mooradian of Winchester, Massachusetts; family-adjacent children Josh and Akiva Sommer of Medford, Massachusetts; best friends and roommates Rachel Kadel and Sam Kadel of Watertown, Massachusetts; and an extensive “found family” of numerous friends and acquaintances in the greater Boston area and around the world.

Ny is buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery. She was sung into the earth with a wordless nigun, to the tune of “Eishet Chayil (Woman of Valor)” (Proverbs 31:10-31) among people who loved her.

Donations in Ny’s name to Planned Parenthood, The Greater Boston Food Bank, The Trevor Project, or TransFamily Alliance are encouraged. Donation notifications may be sent in care of her executor Rachel Sommer at gingicat@duck.com.