

# Rosa Maria Blanch

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Funeral Service

**Saturday, September 24, 2011**

### Minister Girard Haven's Introduction

We are here to celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Rosa Maria Blanch, and to express our gratitude for the privilege of having shared our lives with her.

The meaning of a student's life is not to be found in its large events, in its apparent successes or failures. The moment Conscious Influence first touches one, the true significance of one's life is revealed: the transformation of a play, lovingly designed and guided by the Gods for a divine purpose.

At the death of a friend, we can see their play as a whole. We can see it as we cannot yet fully see our own: as a miraculous destiny, fully guided by a higher hand, perfect. Maria's play has come to fruition, so that she might now truly say, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do".

Let us stand and honor Maria with our silent presence.

(Silence)

### Music: Zoila Munoz

J. S. Bach, Jesu, joy of man's desiring

### Reading: Geoffrey Rowland

Shakespeare, *Sonnet 18*:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

### Eulogy: Leonard Hill

Rosa Maria Blanch, 1960-2011

Maria's role in the school began as a new student in Paris, where she supported herself as a puppeteer in the subway. Our roles in the school often have a humble beginning. Then, as the role increases in responsibility and influence, and our talents and gifts emerge, our lives become a play, written by Conscious Influence. 'Angel and puppet: now we have a play,' wrote Rilke. And then, as though to Maria, and about Maria, he writes, 'And if no one else, the dying see how unreal, how full of pretense, is all that we accomplish here...' We begin humbly and that is how we end. In that arc of a life, where so many things are achieved, so much is suffered, and so much happens, the end dismisses all pretense. All achievement is merely an echo of Being. And Being is an echo of Presence.

The Maria we knew and loved was an admirable figure in the life of Apollo. She was in service here for over 25 years. Again in a humble beginning, she took care of Girard's small children, and worked through the many harvest years at the Winery. Then she took a leadership role for Apollo Arts during the days of abundant music, theater, opera, and ballet. Lastly, she took charge of the images for Robert's meetings and teaching events. She was organized and responsible. She excelled at whatever she put her hand to. She was graceful under pressure, and raised standards in whatever octave she participated in. She demanded more from herself, and from others, knowing that this was for the school.

She wanted to be close to the teacher and source. And when this happened, when she began working on the images for Robert's meetings, she blossomed. She looked like she was in love. A friend told her so, and she replied: 'Isn't it marvelous to be in love and not with a person.' And her dedication, her love for the octave Robert said was an inspiration for his work.

With Maria's operation for cancer two and a half years ago began the final act of this beautiful play. The strings of that responsible, 'doing' person were severed, causing among other things, the loss of her short-term memory. It was a dramatic parting of the old, accomplished self, and of the new. She saw, she knew the difference, as a spectator of her own play. Sitting by herself at a lunch table, a student joined her, and Maria asked if they had a lunch date. 'No,' the friend replied, 'I just thought I'd sit and talk to you.' Maria explained that she kept a book for appointments otherwise she wouldn't remember, but she had left it somewhere. She said, 'But I'm realizing that writing things down has this effect on who I think I am. I remember that person who was so organized, but I don't mind losing that. It was difficult at first, remembering that organized person and not being able to get her back. Now it's different. I don't know what I am or what I will be. That is difficult right now.'

In a sense, Maria's task ended with that operation for her cancer. From that time, much of the Maria we knew before, the accomplished Maria, vanished. For her last two and a half years of life, and without her choice and without an option, she was in essence. She developed and enjoyed friendships as children do, face to face, intimate, unafraid, fun.

She was taken everywhere, enjoyed double portions, became roguish and engaging, and when she dreamed, she dreamed of doing nice things for students and for Robert. Essence was free, in a way that was remarkable to witness. It was a rare time. Friends and acquaintances wholeheartedly supported her, staying with her day and night for the critical post-operation phase, keeping her engaged and emotional in the months that followed. It was an expression of love from students, suddenly available and freely given. She called one of her caretakers a 'superwoman angel friend'. Once, when she dressed all in white, a friend asked her 'Are you getting married?' and she replied, 'I am getting married, to my play.' She was wise yet helpless in many ways, often unaware of what time it was yet ready to share the moment with you; receptive, playful, uncomplicated, direct, simple. No longer Maria in a role, no longer taking responsibility.

And this is the difficulty for us, the witnesses of her play. For what Maria gained did not come from her work on transformation. She lost something; the ability to focus, to have aims, to build will and effort into a single, resolute persona, the Steward. Maria could not make these efforts in this way, any more. But perhaps what she lost, she did not need. Perhaps her years of dedicated service were the payment for a summer of childhood, a holiday of essence. Perhaps our difficulty in understanding her play is that we perceive awakening in terms of the steward, of having aims to be achieved, an objective to reach. And when C-Influence cut the puppet strings to the refined, slim-waisted Maria the Steward, and their replacement was the beaming, genial, plump Maria of Essence, the shock was no less for us as it was for her.

For Maria, the overnight, radical loss of identity and sense of time was not easy. She struggled and failed to reunite her old and new selves. When she shared her feeling of helplessness, a friend asked her what she could do, and Maria replied, 'Just love me.' And in affirming what was already there, there was the resolution. When Maria was asked what was most important to her, she replied, 'My connection to the School.' And when she was asked if it was difficult for her to accept her play, she answered, 'Actually, it wasn't difficult.' This is the new Maria speaking, the wisdom of a child. Thus, humility is the crown of life. For this is not Maria speaking about what she had achieved. This is Maria speaking about what she had been given. To which she wholeheartedly gave herself. She was in love, but not with a person. And what one loves, others will love, and we teach them how.

Now all the puppet strings are severed. Maria returns to the source that bore her. The Conscious Influence that raised her, that took so much from her yet left her so content, is still here, in this very room, available to all of us. A fairytale that she helped to come true. And that is the best fairytale of all, when we all become a part of it.

**Music: Zoila Munoz**

Gounod, Ave Maria

**Reading: Mari Reeves**

Rabia, *In my Soul*:

In my Soul there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a church where I kneel.  
Prayer should bring us to an altar where no walls or names exist.

Is there not a region of Love, where the Sovereignty is illuminated nothing,  
Where ecstasy gets poured into itself and becomes lost,  
Where the wing is fully alive but has no mind or body?

In my Soul there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a church that dissolves,  
That dissolves in God.

**Minister's Conclusion:**

May the intensity of Maria's suffering deepen our understanding of how firmly the Gods may, in their wisdom, choose to press upon us.

And may the simple openness with which she embraced her play be an inspiration to us all. An inspiration for when it is time to serve, when it is time to be loved, and when it is time to love. For after all, when is it not time to love?

Maria, we thank thee.

Minister signals urn bearer. Minister blows out candle. Funeral party leaves.

**At the Cemetery**

**Minister's Introduction**

Here on this beautiful day and in this blessed place, we gather to return Maria's ashes to the earth. Her play on earth is complete; she is released to hers and our true home, in the Celestial City of Paradise.

**Reading: Anne St-Laurent**

*Teresa of Avila: If the Sun Took You in His Arms*

When my mouth touched His I became invisible,  
The way the earth would if the sun  
Took it into  
Its arms.

The ecstatic death I know. What can touch His exquisite form  
Is not anything that can  
Be seen.

How do we make love to God;  
How does the soul make love  
To God?

How does the soul  
Make love to  
God?

The heart has divine instincts;  
It just needs to be turned loose in the sky.

Eulogist guides urn bearer to the grave. Eulogist hands urn to urn bearer. Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

**Minister's Last Invocation**

At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.  
Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks; with a whisper,  
Set ope the doors, O soul.

**Minister's Conclusion**

Minister puts rose petals into the grave.

The earth returns to the earth and a divine spark returns to its divine source. 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity'. The circle of life is complete. Let us join together in saying farewell.

Rose petals in the grave. The leaving begins.