

**ALOHA STANLEY**  
In memory of Stanley Robertson  
Apollo Cemetery  
July 6, 2003

**INTRODUCTION**

*Minister:* We are gathered here in loving presence, this Summer late afternoon, to honor our tender memories of our departed friend, Stanley, who concluded his role in Washington, D.C., on May 4<sup>th</sup> of this year.

John will read from Walt Whitman, and will be followed by Diane, who will read the Eulogy which she has written for this occasion. Following the Eulogy, we will proceed to the grave site to inter Stanley's ashes.

John Graham, "Beginners," by Walt Whitman

Diane Crosby, Eulogy for Stanley Robertson”

**AT GRAVE SIDE**

*Minister:* Once more we gather to bid farewell to an old friend; it will not always be that we each number among the bereaved. Let us use the focus of this occasion, these very moments, to deepen the elusive comprehension of our own life's brevity. May this understanding--which only flickers as we say our final good-byes to one another--become more constant, and may that which is real and lasting in us emerge.

Let us have a moment of silent presence.

Epictetus wrote: Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it is his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you: to choose it is another's.

*Diane Crosby:* “The Sacred Mountain”

*Interment of ashes*

*Yael Ronen,* “Musical Interlude”

*Minister:* “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. . . .  
Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Let us go now, and continue to honor our memories of Stanley, and honor the Gods with renewed and vivid appreciation for the gifts of life and friendship that are yet allotted to each of us.

### "Beginners" by Walt Whitman

HOW they are provided for upon the earth, (appearing at intervals;)  
How dear and dreadful they are to the earth;  
How they inure to themselves as much as to any--What a paradox  
appears their age;  
How people respond to them, yet know them not;  
How there is something relentless in their fate, all times;  
How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation and reward,  
And how the same inexorable price must still be paid for the same  
great purchase.

### "The Sacred Mountain"

We bring to this sacred spot a portion of Stanley's mortal remains, returning them to Mother Earth. The rest of him is being sent to other places important to Stanley: a part is going back to Scotland, where he grew up, some goes to Hong Kong, where he lived as a young man, and some to Hawaii, where he joined the School; some will also remain on the East Coast where he lived the last two decades of his life. While it is fitting that his remains be scattered around the world, it was not his idea.

Stanley's idea was that his mortal shell is not important--it is the inner Self that matters. He also understood that there are many sacred places and that the term "sacred mountain" is really a metaphor referring to higher states, to the real Self. Those states can occur anywhere, at any time: it is not the place that ennobles you, it is you who ennobles the place. As the American Indian Black Elk said:

I saw myself on the central mountain of the world, the highest  
place, and I had a vision because I was seeing in the sacred  
manner of the world . . . but the central mountain is everywhere.  
(from *Black Elk Speaks*)

So, here we are at the central mountain of **our** universe, grateful for our vision: the realization that the Sacred Mountain is the highest part in each of us, that we can always and everywhere ascend to that high place.

And now, we return this stardust to the Earth. Aloha Stanley!

Blow ye winds--  
Our simple wishes take;  
If in God's Will,  
Let every sacred mountain  
Now Awake.

## **Eulogy for Stanley Robertson**

*“A heart in love with beauty never grows old.”*

— Ancient Turkish Proverb

We are here this afternoon to remember our dear friend, Stanley Robertson, who lived and worked among us as a student of the Fourth Way for over 30 years. As the 44th person to join the Fellowship of Friends, he literally helped lay the foundations of our beloved School, both physically and esoterically. He worked unceasingly, even in his last days, refining the beauty of the world we see with our eyes and the inner beauty of our souls, which is only perceptible to a higher faculty.

Throughout his many years of faithful service, Stanley exemplified the spirit of this place called Apollo and this unique time in history, when man's highest hopes might become reality. In another place or time, Stanley would be called "a Renaissance man" based on his many achievements and hobbies. But Stanley was more than just a master gilder with wide-ranging interests; he was truly one of Plato's "men of gold."

Today, we could coin a new term, "the Apollo man," or "Apollonian," to designate one who surpasses the Renaissance man—the Apollonian faces the ever-present gulf between "The Real" and "The Ideal" and neither denies reality, nor dwells in imagination about what "might be," nor is he merely a dabbler in curiosities. Instead, an Apollonian bridges the divide by living an authentic life based on eternal ideals. Stanley was an Apollonian.

So, what are these ideals and how, exactly, did Stanley give them life? To begin, there are the ancient ones: Courage, Loyalty, and Hospitality. In his Scottish way, Stanley embodied each of these virtues; there are many examples: how in mid-life he courageously left a successful career as a professional musician to enter an unrelated field as an apprentice; how he never shirked from difficult jobs or topics; and how he bravely fought his last battle against lung cancer; how he remained loyal to his many friends, collecting their artworks and supporting their aims; and how he generously hosted us in his home—here we can see him pouring us a cup of tea or cooking in the moonlight at his backyard barbecue, perhaps for his birthday party, or for a dozen Lewis Carroll School children on a trip to Washington DC. These ancestral values were in Stanley's heart; they were his patrimony, his base, from which he began and from which he never strayed.

On this solid foundation, Stanley built a life based on the Classical Greek and Renaissance ideals of Truth, Wisdom, and Beauty. Adorning these, he added the Apollonian principals of Presence, Humility, and Love. Here's how Stanley formed and fitted these elements together, ennobling both his life and ours:

First, Truth — One of Stanley's favorite truths was that it's important to have an aim. He lived this truth and accomplished many things in his lifetime. He didn't always have time, however, to finish everything he wanted to do. Stanley took on almost every project he ever saw and was full of ideas on how to improve things—a little repair work here, some gilding there, perhaps a new frame, or a luxurious leather box for a special book—the possibilities were endless. Those handling his estate are still trying to sort out the many unfinished projects in his workshop—they seek your indulgence if you are still awaiting the return of something.

Ironically, one of Stanley's final aims involved a curious little statue of Don Quixote on a horse that he once bought at a yard sale. He really liked it; always displaying it with his art collection. A few months before he died, the Don Quixote was accidentally shattered by workmen painting Stanley's house. He saved the pieces, intending to put it back together again; but, like Humpty

Dumpty, it was not to be. “All the King’s horses and all the King’s men, couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.” The broken Don Quixote has now been given to the talented teenage son of friends in Washington—perhaps this young artist will inherit the art of kings, Stanley’s art, of putting the pieces together in better-than ever form; and, with luck, he’ll also find the internal vision as well, to dream the possible dream, to aim for the stars and beyond.

The second ideal is Wisdom—Stanley knew that truth and wisdom are not necessarily the same thing; he never let mere facts overtake a larger truth. He always wanted to explore subjects in depth, he was persistent, and he had an exceptionally strong work ethic. There is no better example than his willingness to work for years as an unpaid or poorly-compensated apprentice in Paris and London in order to master the skills associated with Art conservation; he rose to become Curator of Frames at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and then transcended even that position. Stanley appreciated the relationship between effort and results; some would-be apprentices have complained that he expected them to work as hard as he did to learn his craft. But, they missed the point; as one person put it: “Stanley’s understanding of the nature of work manifested itself both professionally and in his inner, spiritual work as well; he showed us all how to be better workers, including how to value our own efforts.”

Thankfully, Stanley also taught: Many of us have attended one of Stanley’s presentations on the subject of frames or gilding and we have come away with indelible memories, such as handling a tiny bit of real gold leaf—like most ladies, I used mine to “polish” a fingernail. My “golden finger” created a higher state, until I realized that this bit of “real gold” would be lost down the drain when I washed my hands! I still retain the memory, though, which shows that Stanley understood the relative value of the golden experiences he provided us.

Third, there’s Beauty, something easy to see once revealed, but always hard to define and frequently impossible to perceive under the many layers obscuring it. Stanley had a magical ability to reveal and to create beauty, seemingly from nothing. Have you ever visited his shop and been among the crumbling frames and aged objects he’s had for repair? Most people would find such dusty, broken artifacts were hardly fit for firewood, but Stanley saw their potential, their depth, and their significance—wizard-like, he conjured their potential beauty into reality. And the beauty he actualized was always appropriate to the item’s age, condition, and function: a missing comer on a curlicued French frame would be molded based on an intact one; antique gold leaf cleaned and new gold leaf applied to the newly re-constructed bits, then—just enough dirt rubbed into the new gold so that the new matched the old without attracting undue attention; even fake wormholes could be drilled into the new parts so that they matched the old parts perfectly and Voila! Another antique resurrected to new life!

Stanley translated his love of the beautiful into the personal quality of Joy; he loved life and his joyfulness bubbled up at every opportunity, making the world a sunnier place. Thus, the old Turkish Proverb describes our friend: his was “a heart in love with beauty” that “never grew old.” His joy sprang from deep inside him and it was contagious: we were happy too, when Stanley was present.

Presence is our Fourth Ideal. Stanley liked Shakespeare’s famous question: “To be or not to be?” and he helped us to “be” in the present by focusing our attention on the miraculous details of beautiful things. There’s a saying that “the devil’s in the details,” but Stanley found the angels there—and pointed them out.

His abilities in this area shone brightly in his last two years: retiring from most of his usual pursuits, he began, for his own enjoyment, carving ducks and other birds out of wood. It was amazing to visit him and witness the depth of his research into the minutiae of the birds he was

recreating—he perused diagrams that depicted every feather and every barb on every feather; he hung birdfeeders in his backyard; he had props like little plaster molds of real duck heads tucked away in a pocket that he used to study the details of the subtle markings under a duck's bill, or to demonstrate how the male's head differs from the female's in this species. Such details usually aren't noticed, even by experienced birdwatchers! His efforts to recreate beautiful birds kept his heart lively in his last few months.

Fifth, there is the Ideal of Humility. Can't you hear what Stanley would say right about now: "She-e-e-sh, you must not know me very well!" But it's true, Stanley, you were always willing to learn, even in your last days—and you were very modest. Why, even as you struggled with your last illness, you contacted new instructors, master woodcarvers, and took lessons from them. You were never embarrassed to show us your first efforts at your new art form. Here [show carving], for example, is a little bird you carved as you commenced your studies. This first effort from your last days inspires us.

Your humble, teachable, "hungry to learn more" attitude was there from early to late; it is characteristic of one of Walt Whitman's beginners. You helped us to understand that we must all constantly begin again, and again, and again.

Finally, there is the Ideal of Love, which is the basis of true friendship. Stanley practiced friendship as an art form—he loved everybody and we loved him back. Just as he could see the beauty in material things, he could also see the beauty inside a person, and he helped it to blossom. This does not mean that he engaged in flattery; rather, he was more likely to let you have it with a zinging observation aimed at just the right spot. Nevertheless, he always made it clear that he remained your friend.

In sum, Stanley always had time for people and he enjoyed them; we enjoyed him back. We will always remember him, our true, authentic friend. The Ancient Egyptians represented the souls of the deceased as stars in the ever-turning sky; tonight, as you traverse the sacred mountain-top, Behold Our Wondrous Stars!