

Memorial Service for Roger Cavanna

MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

ROGER CAVANNA

1944- 2006

Sunday October 8th ,2006

3:00pm at the Isis Theatron

Memorial Service for Roger Cavanna

Minister (Colin Lambert): Introduction

On this temperate and sunny early Autumn afternoon, we gather, once again, to kneel in loving presence, to honor and celebrate the life of a beloved friend. We, here... now try to give expression to our deepest gratitude for the privilege of having shared the graciousness of Roger Cavanna's living and the beauty and the bounty of his work.

"It will always be a major shock when such a beloved ^{friend} student of the inner circle completes their role." Roger's passing, like the passing of each of our dear friends, has pierced us and has momentarily parted the veil of life allowing us one more fleeting glimpse of that which is deeper, more true, more real and more enduring. Let us each be reminded that the Gods have granted us, lives of only certain length and opportunity... numbered breathes to return the divine embrace. Roger was a member of our Fellowship and lived among us for 32 years. His robust devotion to his beloved family and his deeply personal connection to and gratitude for his teacher were significant and unwavering landmarks of his ruggedly poetic psychological landscape.

Those who knew and loved you Roger, are left eternaly grateful and we thank you.

May we now stand for a moment of silent presence...

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Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepard;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;

He leadeth me besides the still waters.

He restoreth my soul;

He leadeth me in the path of righteousness

For his names sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley

Of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence

Of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in

The house of the Lord forever.

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Musical Interlude: Elizabeth Kent

"LITANEI" SCHUBERT

Reading: John Graham

THE ASHES OF UNION

O Soul,
You are the Phoenix
 rising up from the ashes of Union.

Why don't you fly? -
No one knows you on the ground.

You are the heart's sweetness
And by some magical power
 your form ravishes a thousand hearts.

For a time you took form in the body.
For a time you passed beyond the heavens and the bonds of both
worlds.

Why can't the spirit find you? -
You are its wings and its feathers.
Why can't the eye see you? -
You are the source of its sight.

What will happen to your copper soul
 when the Alchemist arrives?
Will it not become gold?
What will become of your little seed
 when the Springtime arrives? -

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Will it not become a towering tree?
What will happen to brushwood
 when it falls into fire?-
Will it not change into sparks and rise to heaven?

Reason and intellect
Are like the dim light of distant stars.
You are the bright Sun
 that shines through every veil.

The world is nothing but snow and ice.
You are the burning heat of Summer.
O King, no trace of this world remains
 the moment you arrive!

Who can sit by your side?
Everyone would vanish with one glance of yours.

O blessed eyes!
I have seen something beyond imagination,

unreachable by fortune or human effort-

I have seen the perfect face

 of Shams.

Musical Interlude: Elizabeth Kent

Reading: Mari Reeves

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Eulogy: Daniel Goldman

Eulogy for Roger Cavanna, October 8, 2006

It was on our first visit to Isis that Candice and I met Roger. Since then, Pamela and Roger have been our closest friends. Our children went to the same schools, we were in the same center, we celebrated our birthdays together and traveled together. Most of all, we shared the work together. For many, Roger was hard to get close to, and until recently, did not get the best of Roger, but the best was always there and once you got to know him you could see through that imposing facade to someone who was kind, gentle, compassionate and generous.

Roger was a deeply devoted husband to Pamela, father to Conroy, his wife Jenny and Matthew and grandfather to Dean and Calvin. He was a loyal friend to his loving care giver Maurizio and dear friend Beth. Outside of the family, what was most important to him was his love for Robert and his devotion to the Fellowship. In Bahaudins words, "You cannot have two foundations. Either you stand and act from your heart and soul, or your life will flow from the animal soul. Roger understood, early on, that Robert was saving his life by showing him the way to tame the Beast within.

Roger played an important role in the early development of Isis as ranch manager, bringing his training as an architect and city planner to shaping this property. He shared his knowledge of oriental carpets, the culture of Persia and Sufi poetry and was always ready with a line from the Rubaiyat.

In August of 2004, Roger led a meeting, at the Prytaneion, on the subject of "The Transformation of Suffering". He said he chose the topic not because he felt he had any special being in the area, but

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more as a personal inquiry and challenge for himself and his work. I remember well our discussing the theme and Roger being especially inspired by the following lines from a Rumi poem:

“Someone asked a great sheikh what Sufism was and he replied. The feeling of joy when sudden disappointment comes.”

Barely five months later the die was cast and 60 years of living, and 30 years of being in the school, were put to the test through which he would come to the Being, of Living those lines.

It was during the holidays in late December 2004, that Roger, who all of a sudden was having difficulty speaking, was diagnosed as having a brain tumor and scheduled for immediate surgery. Candice was with him in the hospital just before he was taken into the operating room. By this time, Roger's speech was almost completely gone and he was trying to tell her something which seemed very important. Candice listened carefully and with much effort and true selflessness, he asked her if she could find someone to take over his octave of scheduling refreshments for the center meetings.

The tumor was removed and the surgery seemed successful. Roger's ability to speak returned and the initial prognosis was that the cancer was a slow growing grade 2 tumor and there was the likelihood that he could live up to another 10 years. I visited him in the hospital and he told me how deeply grateful he was for the time he was given and would use it for himself, his family and the school.

A few days later, the final lab test resulted in another prognosis. The cancer was a stage 4 tumor. Instead of years, he had months. After finding this out, later that evening Roger chose to go to our Center meeting in SF. I picked him up at the Ferry Building and with tears he told me the news. For Roger, this was a profoundly penetrating realization of how little time he had and he did not want to waste any of it.

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Rumi said "It is not for us to seek love but to find what keeps us from receiving Love." Along these lines Robert once said, in a daily card, "one definitely wants to keep subtracting from the lower self and adding to the higher self." Roger's transforming of his shock propelled him in this process. Within that transformation, was not only acceptance, but deep sense of gratitude, and from this, the door was wide open to now to receive Love, Presence. Buffers fell off him like an avalanche of heavy stones leaving this immense man light as a feather. His center of gravity firmly shifted to the nine of hearts and the steward.

This poem, by Hafiz, describes the Roger that emerged:

Integrity

Few have the strength to be a real Hero ---

That rare man or women who always keeps their Word.

Even an angel needs rest.

Integrity creates a body so vast

A thousand winged ones will Plead,

"May I lay my cheek against you?"

For Roger the word he kept and acted from with so much Constancy was BE.

What was it like to be with Roger. Rumi expresses it best, "I will become humble and turn into soil, so your flower can grow in me." This is the Roger we knew his last 20 months and the Roger who lives within us and inspires us now.

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I will end with the last four lines from the "Joy of Sudden Disappointment"

If the beloved is everywhere,
the lover is a veil,

but when living Itself becomes
The friend, lovers disappear

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Remembrance: Pamella Cavanna

Roger George Cavanna

Roger, your name tastes sweet in my mouth.

Roger whose name means famous with a spear

Roger

Born August 9, 1944 Glastonbury, Connecticut- that day the potatoes burned in the fields your mother was fond of recalling.

Died October 3, 2006 Larkspur, California-that day the Earth wept we will be fond of recalling

So many, many experiences, accomplishments, triumphs in between.

Many of them here at your beloved Isis with your cherished friends and precious teacher.

An exquisite human being is passing from this world.

My lover, beloved father of our children, dharma partner, husband, and finally, Friend, has made his transition.

Our precious father, grandfather, brother, brother-in-law, nephew and uncle has crossed over.

Our generous mentor, student, teacher, poet and lover of poetry, architect, golfer, fisherman, sufi and rug dealer has completed his task.

For almost two years he showed us how to live fully while facing death. We honor his warrior spirit, his love of beauty and family, his strength and incredible gentleness. We will miss you. We will never forget you. In us and through us you have become immortal, a Lover of the World. Through you we have become liberated.

Thank you Robert for your unswerving friendship with Roger, for your guidance and skill in gentling this great wild stallion of a man who was my husband.

Thank you friends for your careful and supportive holding of me and my family while Matthew and I helped Roger make his transition.

Thank you sisters and brothers and spouses for making the journeys to be here with us and for the love, fun and relativity you carry in your hearts.

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Thank you Conroy, Matthew and Jenny for coming to us and giving us the experience of being parents and grandparents and the warm and familiar experience of family. Thank you Maurizio for your devoted, loving and precise care of Roger the last year and a half.

And finally, thank you Great Spirit, God, Precious C-Influence, Isis for the incredible teaching on death and dying that unfolded over the last months, weeks, days and moments of Roger's play.

"Give me a hero and I will give you an epic"
Roger, you are our hero and your life was epic.

THE TENDER MOUTH

What will
the burial of my body be?

The pouring of a sacred cup of wine
Into the tender mouth of
The earth

And making my dear sweet lover laugh

One more
Time

Hafiz

Musical Interlude:

Reading: Mathew Cavanna

Silent Escaping

I have broken out again,
escaped from the tricky,
wiry shamans of ecstasy.

Running night and day to escape night and day.
why fear grief
when Death walks so close beside?

Don't fear the General
if you're good friends with the Prince.

For forty years I made plans and worried about them.
Now sixty-two, I've escaped reasonableness.

By definition, human beings do not see or hear.
I broke loose from definition.

Skin outside, seeds inside,
a fig lives caught between, and like that fig,
I wriggle free.

Hesitation, deadly. Hurrying, worse.
Escape both delay and haste.

Fed first with blood in the womb,
then milk from the breast,
my clever teeth came in,
and I escaped even those.

Off balance, I grope for bread, a loaf or two,
until God gives the next food,
and I'm gone.

No more garlicky detail, no more meanings.
Only clean-breathed,
silent escaping.

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Minister (Colin Lambert): Close

In Psalms 90 it is written:

We spend our years as a tale *that is told*.

The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten;

and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years,

yet *is* their length labor and sorrow;

for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

So teach *us* to number our days,

that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

We will no longer hear the ancient and wise voice of Omar Kayam through Roger's manly tenderness, nor shall we again delight to catch his penetrating glance, yet what Roger became is part of who we are and looking deep, we will always see him. His steady and certain love of the Gods, his teacher and school... his treasured family, has taught and inspired us.

Always, we will remember his blessed role and now, we tenderly release him.

May we... each struggle and each succeed in the transformation of our loss, and each gain thereby, the sacred and healing state of acceptance.

We go on... and we continue to honor the Gods and our departed friends by ...returning to the present, while yet we may.