

Funeral Service for Sean Roberts

Sean Roberts
1958 - 2016

Funeral Service

Saturday, April 30th, 2016

Funeral Service for Sean Roberts

Minister Graylin Ross's Introduction

Dear friends, on this day filled with the boldness and beauty of the full Spring, we gather to honor and celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Sean Roberts.

Let us stand and remember our friend Sean in silent presence.

Silence

Thank you, please be seated.

Each student, through their being and their efforts, forms a stem of our school's living tree. Each student raises our School, produces their true Selves and enriches our lives.

Our Teacher has said, 'Ascending souls finish their roles very well prepared, having received the presence allotted to them in this lifetime.'

Sean is an example to us all; his return to the divine source reminds us of our own journey, and to treasure this great mystery of life.

Reading: Julian - Hafiz "A Suspended Blue Ocean"

The sky
Is a suspended blue ocean.
The stars are the fish
That swim.
The planets are the white whales
I sometimes hitch a ride on,
And the sun and all light
Have forever fused themselves
Into my heart and upon
My skin.
There is only one rule
On this Wild Playground,
For every sign Hafiz has ever seen
Reads the same.
They all say,
'Have fun, my dear; my dear, have fun,
In the Beloved's Divine
Game,
O, in the Beloved's
Wonderful
Game.'

Music: Stephen Rice - Cello solo - Bach Suite #1 "Prelude"

Eulogy for Sean, Peter van Straten

The summer of 1977.... Turan Faik Berkan the son of a Turkish Immigrant and a US born Mother left Ann Arbor, Michigan.

After selling his piano, his Frank Zappa albums and other precious belongings, he drove an old Mercedes across country to the heart of our school.

He was nineteen years old, and having found the teaching, he was ready to give himself entirely to a new life.

Turan later changed his name to Sean Roberts, Roberts was his mother's last name, which seemed appropriate being Robert's student.

The first time I met Sean, I felt immediately attracted to him, as though I already knew him. Somehow I knew that he would teach me a lot about the work, life in the school and as it turned out, most of all about friendship. I could see that

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here was a man looking for the real thing in a friend, to penetrate to their essence.

Sean was my best man at our wedding. Recently I found out that he was the best man in six! weddings.... a token of how well loved he was.

We sometimes use the phrase 'standing on the shoulders of those who came before us'. Sean is a perfect example.

His résumé is quite something; he worked on just about every construction project that we can enjoy at Apollo today.

First, he worked with Kenneth on the Bindery, this building where we are now. He would sleep here... (point at the ceiling) in the attic during the night.

When the Bindery became a concert hall, Sean became a major part of the music octave, but more about that later.....

The next big octaves were building the Winery and transforming Robert's home, the Blake cottage, into what is now the Galleria. As part of Christian's crew, he worked on both projects simultaneously.

Sean was a great cook, and his next phase was working as a chef and manager in the Lincoln lodge.

Later he worked on Robert's home in Grey Eagle, and for twelve years, he worked with Kenneth and Brian on the Palm Tree octave.

But music was one of Sean's biggest contributions to the school.

In 1978, Robert started an Orchestra by asking students to study an instrument. He wanted Sean to stop playing the piano -at which he was really good- and to play the double bass as part of the new Orchestra.

He would play in the Apollo Orchestra for most of his life. Jazz was his second musical love, and he played in the Apollo Jazz trio for many years, bringing enjoyment to many.

Sean's two favourite quotes were Gurdjieff's, "Remember yourself always and everywhere," and Mendelsohn's statement: "Music is not too indefinite for words. On the contrary, music is too definite for words."

He wasn't formatory about this though, and could talk at length about music with you, and he showed many of us how to love, to listen and to appreciate classical music.

Sometimes he would put on the late String Quartets of Beethoven, and with his closest friends follow the score, looking for the innermost meaning of these profound compositions.

Sean was good at hosting artists. He took care of world-class musicians visiting Apollo, and became good friends with many of them. He drove Zara Nelsova and her 18th century Stradivarius cello around Apollo in a 1962 Ford pickup truck. She loved it...and him.

He became close to Menahem Pressler and the Beaux Arts Trio and he did such a good job taking care of them, that they wanted him to be their tour manager. Which he respectfully declined.

Working at the Lincoln Lodge Kitchen in the early eighties, he met Marlyss. Or 'Marvelous' as he called her. They knew each other already from joining the school in 1977, Detroit, Michigan. This time, they fell in love... And in April, 1985, with the lilacs in full bloom, Marlyss and Sean were married in the Galleria.

Their friends came to recognize how externally considerate they were when they were invited to one of the many dinners at their home. If a friend was distraught over a broken relationship, or a couple had lost their home, Sean and Marlyss provided healing comfort; actually.. love to anyone in need. But always with presence and reminders not to identify.

Sean would cook delicious dinners and, as Sean would say, Marlyss would be the "hostess with the mostest."

We would dine and converse about the work, music, and relax with watching vintage cartoons or classic films.

Often at the end of these evenings, as he said goodbye, Sean would give you a hug, look you in the eye and say 'Always and Everywhere' ... This often created the third state for myself and others.

In August last year, Sean became ill...It was not easy, but he was relentless in transforming suffering. His energy became very fine and his beautiful sense of humor stayed with him until the end.

The last two weeks were especially difficult, but he was really happy to come home on his 58th birthday, March 24th.

Three days later on Easter Sunday at sunrise, he completed his task.

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The Teacher stated that an anagram of the name Sean Roberts is 'Easters Born'.

Although at times he struggled with life on the planet, Sean never wavered in his dedication to the school and his personal work. He loved presence, Robert, Marlyss, and his friends, at all times, without reservation.

He came to Apollo, a nineteen year old boy, with a sense of purpose and a strong desire for more than what life could offer; he left, a wonderful man, well-grounded in the work, and profoundly grateful for what he had found during the forty years he lived with us.

Always and everywhere, Sean!

Motoshi Kosako - Solo Harp - American folk song "Oh Shenandoah"

Reading: Roger Jackson - Hafiz "And for No Reason"

And
For no reason
I start skipping like a child.
And
For no reason
I turn into a leaf
That is carried so high
I kiss the Sun's mouth
And dissolve.
And
For no reason
A thousand birds
Choose my head for a conference table,
Start passing their
Cups of wine
And their wild songbooks all around.
And
For every reason in existence
I begin to eternally,
To eternally laugh and love!
When I turn into a leaf
And start dancing,
I run to kiss our beautiful Friend
And I dissolve in the Truth
That I Am.

Music: Michael Meeks & Justin McKay - Trumpet & Piano - Joaquin Rodrigo "Concerto De Aranjuez Adagio"

Minister's Conclusion:

A king of ancient times said, 'I am only a child, yet without ceasing, day and night, I act in harmony with heaven.' Sean is now part of that light that beckons from above. He forms part of a new succession in the celestial world, made lovelier still because he bore her part.

May Sean's unswerving dedication to the Teacher, the school and his beloved friends serve to strengthen this commitment in each of us.

May his youthful spirit and good humor, his determination to use these qualities in facing life's challenges, inspire us to use the same in easing the burden of life.

And may we be filled with the same great valuation that he possessed for the unfaltering love of the gods, of his Teacher and from a fellowship that can only come from friends.

Dearest Sean, we thank thee!

Candle ceremony

'Our body is just a shell, our soul will continue.'

Extinguish and light the candles.

Urn-bearer comes forward, lifts the urn and leads the procession from the hall.

Procession music: Motoshi - Solo Harp

At the Cemetery:

Music as funeral party arrives: Stephen Rice - Cello

Minister's Introduction

Here in this sacred place, consecrated by those here present and those whose bodies lie here, we release Sean to his and our true home, even as we return the remains of his body to the earth from where it sprung.

Music: Jay Ungar "Ashoken Farwell"

Minister

The earth returns to the earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, yet we look toward eternal life.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

Minister's Conclusion

Rabia said, 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity'. A divine flame returns to its divine source. The circle of life is complete. We only part so that we meet again.

Minister and family take rose petals and put them into the grave.

Let us bid farewell and then withdraw for a toast at the gazebo, and celebrate the gift of life yet allotted to each of us.

Rose-petals offered to the assembly.