

Ceremony for Daniele Pietrini at Apollo, Sept. 21, 2017

Minister Rowena Taylor:

Daniele Pietrini died a year ago this month, of cancer, three months before his forty-second birthday. He joined our school in Rome in 2005, when he was thirty. Ten years later, his love for Barbara led her to join us, and then their marriage. When he died, he was the center director in Modena, where Barbara lives, and also Samuele, who is with us today.

Love and evolution: his love of beauty, of the Work, of life, of his wife—such definite phases in so short a time. His poetry is the poetry of a soul. ‘In reality, I am being born from a point beyond myself’, he wrote.

L'ultima cosa che di me vedrete
sarà uguale alla prima, identici
schiena e petto, tra testa e piedi
lo stesso peso. Muoio danzando
per non restare indietro, parziale,
come chi vive in due luoghi diversi.[...]
Anche la morte voglio usare
per aumentare il mio essere.

The last thing you will see of me
will be the same as the first, the same
back and chest, between head and foot
the same weight. I die dancing
to avoid going backwards; divided,
like one living in two different places...
Even death I wish to use
to increase my being.

Music: Chopin Nocturne - Susan Schofield / Marta Fraternelli.

Daniele had a gift for expressing himself, even with his disability of deafness. In the museum where he served as a guide and protector, another guide, Federica, recognized his presence and joined our work. He was keen to share the gift of our school with new people, and was a light to them. By the end of his life, Daniele attained that point of transformation where the difficult overwhelms the physical, and the only escape is through the spirit. His poetry of the last year of his life tells of his great escape from the earth.

Each morning while he still could, he went to a small window where he stayed in hospital, to watch the dawn. Each morning he wrote a poem for that dawn – none of them like the others.

Reading by Giovanni Ciancetta:

Alba,
vista di spalle a un'altra alba:
la casa,
tremante,
dilatata verso oriente –
accostandoti a una finestra,
bisbigli ovunque –
sguardi luminosi,
apnee.
Con un guardiano hai passato la notte:
cosa ti spiegò, lo intendi ora.

Dawn,
seen from the rim of another dawn:
the house,
trembling,
expanding eastward –
approaching a window,
everywhere whispers –
luminous eyes,
you hold your breath.
With a guardian you have passed the night:
what he explained, you now understand.

Of all poets, Daniele loved Dante the most. To honor the ascent of Daniele's bright soul, we close with the final lines of the Divine Comedy:

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

But like a wheel, whose circling nothing jars,
My yearning and my will were borne along
By love that moves the sun and other stars.

Let us join each other in a toast celebrating Daniele's beautiful life.

Toast by Samuele Lambertini:

*In his very last days, Daniele broke into tears, but used the work I Kneel,
suggested by our Teacher, and said very clearly,
“How I loved living my Life!”*

