

To Stephan Black

By Irene Black

We, his mother Irene, sister Sigrid, and brother Martin, are heartbroken over Stephan's early departure from life. Karen, we grieve with you.

My first born was a happy child when very young. Growing into a teenager his curiosity made him at times a loner, grasping for love his father could not give him. But he inherited the special eye of a photographer. At age 16 he became the school picture taker. Instead of going to college after graduation from high school, he went to Kenya for one year to teach school. I think it took courage to move thousands of miles from home at age 18. Rereading his letters from Africa helped me to realize how much Stephan had grown during that year abroad.

Back in Seattle for Stephan came what we call in Germany the *Wanderjahre*, the years of searching, of mastering some kind of work or trade, to secure one's future. This search brought him to Oregon House, the Fellowship—again a completely new environment. A few years of hard physical work gave him an opportunity of learning to operate heavy equipment, lay sewer lines, make land ready for planting grape vines, to become better acquainted with the Fellowship.

Stephan married; his son Michael was born. Michael was only 30 years old when his life was cut short by a motorbike accident. What a deep, deep loss this was for Stephan! Losing a son prematurely is cruel, but who are we to criticize fate when it grips the spokes of the wheel we are on, forcing it to stop moving.

The German word for profession is *Beruf*, meaning what one is called for, work one is good at and loves, thus making it easier to grow the inner self. About ten years back Stephan tried his hand in real estate. With this profession he eventually became independent and successful. This was his *Beruf*.

I believe we are all trying to accept and understand ourselves, bring our physical and spiritual being into harmony. This is an enormous task. I like to believe that the leader of the School, living and teaching his philosophical and theological beliefs to the School's members, has helped my son to find harmony within himself. Stephan needed more time to complete this noble task.

Goethe says, "Das ist der gluecklichste Mensch, der das Ende seines Lebens mit dem Anfang verbinden kann" (The luckiest man is he who can connect the end of his life with its beginning). I like to think the world Stephan is in now will make it possible to find himself completely.

Music, nature and my native tongue connected Stephan and myself. We loved to sing, listen to classical music, play the recorder. On walks with him I admired his knowledge of birds, by sight and sound.

Karen, our very special thanks for the endless hours you spent with Stephan when in the hospital, to help and comfort him.

My last words, whispered into his ear, were: "Wir werden uns bald wieder sehen in einer besseren Welt" (We shall see each other soon in a better world).

Goodbye to my beloved son, fare thee well.
Much love, your Mutt (pronounced like *look*)
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