

Stefan Recki

*August 5, 1960 – June 26, 2022*

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Memorial Service  
Minister: Rowena

December 30, 2022

**Minister's Introduction:**

Welcome friends. And a warm welcome to Stefan and Elvira's son Filip, who is with us today.

We have come together today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Stefan Recki. We are here to hold Stefan in our hearts for this brief period, and then release him, together transforming our sorrow into presence.

At the death of a friend, we can see their play as a whole. And we can see it—as we cannot yet fully see our own—as a perfect, complete, and realized destiny. Now we more clearly understand the payment and contribution that Stefan made, and we are grateful for the gentle warmth and friendliness he brought to his interactions with his fellow students, for his devotion to his family, and for the consistent support he gave to the school over twenty years.

Now let us stand and remember Stefan in silent presence.

*(Silence)*

Thank you.

The physical body is designed to produce presence and being, and then to be laid aside. Walt Whitman said, "The best of me then, when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly striving." Stefan takes with him the presence that he has gained in this lifetime, and his connection with Influence C. Our teacher has said, "That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough."

[**Reading:** Walt Whitman, “Darest Thou Now O Soul”]  
(Reader: Wayne)

“Darest Thou Now O Soul”

*By Walt Whitman*

DAREST thou now O soul,  
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,  
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,  
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen,  
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,  
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,  
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,  
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil O soul.

[Eulogy: Elvira]

Stefan was born into an artistic family in Ghent, living close to Saint Bavo's Cathedral, which houses Van Eyck's "Mystic Lamb." His father, who was Polish, escaped from a concentration camp in Germany during the Second World War and joined the Allies to liberate Europe. His adopted Belgian family helped him to pursue his dreams and become an artist and a successful window display designer. Stefan's mother was Flemish and shared her husband's passion for art. Stefan was the oldest son of the four children. From childhood he had a lively curiosity and a strong interest in technology.

He wasn't an easy or obedient child. He once made a hole in a wall so he could see the presents that were hidden in the room. Another time, he painted his brother's hand red and told him to show his hand from behind a door, letting the red paint drip on the new staircase and frighten his mother.

Stefan was fascinated by science and spent hours in his room inventing and experimenting. His gold alchemy was stimulated by the environment his parents created. They had a shop selling beautiful objects in the center of Ghent. Stefan and his brother and sisters used to help to wrap gifts sold during busy holiday times.

Stefan appreciated classical music and ballet. He sang in the church choir with his brother and carried a love for Bach's music throughout his life. After joining the school, he began studying the texts of Bach's arias, making connections to school ideas and strengthening his first line of work. When I was pregnant, he used to sing "Summertime" to my belly. When the boys born, they were both at ease in his hands, hearing the familiar voice and the song.

He was very intelligent and a brilliant technician, with a deep understanding of complex industrial cooling installations. He had great negotiation skills, speaking fluent English, Dutch, German, and French. He could find the right words to convey his meaning to all parties involved.

He talked about cooling systems with great passion, explaining how important they are in almost every area of human life—whether for a bank, a chocolate factory, or a warehouse. Although he was not able to finish his studies and get a degree in engineering, he mastered his profession working onsite in Africa, Austria, Russia, and Belgium.

He lived in Ghent during his twenties and thirties, commuting to Antwerp for his job for 9 long years. While staying in Vienna for several months working on a large project, he started going to the museums, and realized that the fine impressions were invigorating for his essence. He decided that he was ready to move to Antwerp and begin a new life, and he bought an apartment there. Shortly after that, he made a business trip to Moscow, where he asked for a Russian lady to teach him the language, hoping deep in his heart that she would be his destiny. In this way we met on a cold winter evening in early 1999.

Stefan looked as if he stepped out of the books from my childhood. A mysterious man living in a kingdom, with playful curly hair, a wild beard, and a pipe in his hands. In a light blue shirt matching his shining cunning eyes, wearing funny red suspenders decorated with edelweiss blossoms. It soon became clear that we were part of a well-written play full of shocks and humor, revealing the fascinating puzzle of our lives.

Stefan fitted in Russia very well; he felt at ease and was loved and appreciated by my parents and friends. He talked to my dad using a few Russian words, plenty of gesticulation, and quick technical

drawings. We started talking about the Fourth Way right from the start; he was so eager to hear about Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. His business trip was short. When he returned to Belgium we continued talking weekly on the phone and writing letters to each other. About a year later we were living together, and we were married in March 2001. Beautiful and vibrant Antwerp was different from his home town of Ghent, but he enjoyed the city in which we've happily lived till his last breath.

After the birth of our oldest son in 2002, Stefan was very clear about his desire to move from reading workbooks to making practical efforts to remember himself. We decided to contact the Brussels Center, but for months no one responded to the prospective student phone number. With incredible luck, we were able to join the school in Moscow during a short vacation. We had our three prospective student meetings in English there, and it was very emotional and overwhelming. A student recalls: "Stefan and I met on his first perspective meetings in Moscow. I remember him to be an attentive, humble, and friendly person. It was a strong experience to meet someone who immediately recognized the value of self-remembering, and the need of a school, teacher, and friends."

Stefan tried to figure out everything, absorbing the school knowledge. We joined on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 and had the privilege of being actively involved in the school for 20 years. We shared many magical moments together, travelling to teaching events in Paris, Vienna, Athens, Rome, Florence, Amsterdam, Milan, Apollo. We visited many centers and spent time formally and informally with dear students. We were in Apollo during the first Journey Forth by Day celebration, and were immersed in the incredible atmosphere of love and friendship. We often took children to the teaching events and museums.

A friend remembers, "Stefan quietly served and participated in the life of the Brussels center throughout his time in the Fellowship. His quietly positive nature often erupted into an enthusiastic and knowledgeable explanation about something. He remained focused and dedicated to his work, never losing the thread."

It was our choice to use most of our income to attend teaching events and experience fine impressions, instead of buying a house and having a more comfortable lifestyle. We never regretted this, despite the daily irritations of living in a small place and making ends meet.

Stefan, with his Jovial-Lunar nature, tended to be relaxed and passive, while I tend to be active and in charge. He often said that he was there to teach me to be patient. And indeed, he was a great teacher in this area! He would delve deeply into conversations and tasks, and then miss deadlines or be late. Observing our opposite tactics was insightful and helped both of us to become more aware of mechanicality and learn to respond instead of reacting.

Stefan's wisdom and philosophical thinking was much appreciated by his colleagues and clients. Students remarked on his friendliness, his gentle nature, and his warm smile.

His death was sudden and unexpected. It is a huge loss for us, but we are enormously grateful for the time we shared together creating presence and transforming friction. Stefan was a loving husband and a devoted student. He could be grumpy at home, but when he was tender and loving it was very penetrating and rewarding.

Love continues on another level beyond the physical world. Deep sorrow, gratitude, love, and numerous precious memories remain. He lives in our hearts, in the smiles of our children, and in the memories of his friends, family, and colleagues.

**[Music: J. S. Bach, Flute Sonata BWV 1034, 3rd movement]**  
(Musicians: Rustam, flute, and Stephen, cello)

**Minister's Conclusion:**

The death of a friend reminds us that we each inhabit a fragile and temporary vessel, from which presence emerges and connects us.

May we remember, and be inspired by, Stefan's gentle wisdom, his valuation for and dedication to our shared work, and his many years of quiet service and consistent participation in the school.

Dear Stefan, we thank thee.

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of Stefan is complete. The shell of the body falls away, and the soul that inhabited that body is released to continue its journey.

**Candle Ceremony**

Now let us join in raising a glass to Stefan, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the gift of life that has been allotted to us.

**[Participants gather for the toast.]**

**[Toast: Ingrid]**

We toast to our dear friend Stefan, who was with us in his true, loving, caring and good nature.  
The warmth and joy of his tender and good heart will live through us  
Forever...  
His sincere and profound work will be remembered throughout  
Eternity....

Thank you  
Dear Stefan!