

Olga Radinskaya

April 13, 1939 – August 20, 2023

Minister: Curtis

December 2, 2023

[Music: Pietro Mascagni, intermezzo from “Cavaliere Rusticana”]
(Musician: Justin McKay, piano)

[Minister’s Introduction]

Welcome friends, and a special welcome to Olga’s grandchildren Katja and Nikita, and to their father Victor.

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Olga Radinskaya. We are here to bear witness to the mortal woman who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of her name, and to the immortal soul that has transcended that role.

One of Olga’s favorite quotations was from Hermann Hesse: “A magic dwells in each new beginning, and teaches us how to live.” Throughout her life, she retained the resilience, courage, and joy of her essence, so that in her 60s she could enter the Fellowship and share those qualities with us all.

Let us stand and remember Olga 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.” Olga has taken with her the presence that she gained in this lifetime, and her connection with Influence C. Our teacher said, “That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough.”

[Music: “Allemande” from Bach’s first cello suite]
(Musician: Stephen Rice, cello)

[Eulogy: Natasha G.]

I never expected my mother to meet the teacher and join the Fellowship, and when she did, it was in a very characteristic way. When she turned 60, we traveled together to Italy, and in Florence went to an exhibition of Caravaggio's paintings. We didn't know that Robert was traveling at the same time. The exhibition was in a church, and there were benches where you could lie down and look at the frescoed ceiling. I was lying down on a bench, and when I stood up, Olga was in front of a painting talking to Robert.

It was a strong shock for both of us. She recognized Robert from his photos, she knew I was in the school, but she still had her own entrance. She didn't join right away, but a few years later she came to Apollo to visit me. She was out walking and saw a double rainbow and made her decision. She called and attended the prospective student meetings, and joined the school—in Apollo, not in Moscow. She didn't even tell me that she went for the meetings. She was in the school for 20 years.

Olga Radinskaya was born in Kislovodsk, in the mountains of the Caucasus, in 1939, one month before Robert. The people there are intense and have an immediacy and openness to others. They don't recognize any barriers or distance between people, and Olga shared this quality. She came very close to people right away. When she was 16, she left home and began a new life in Moscow on her own, attending university there. She was always learning, learning, learning. She was a self-made woman, becoming extremely educated and cultivated, with a high valuation for the arts, a great love of poetry, of literature, of philosophy. She married and I was born there.

Later she was divorced, and met her second husband, an antiques dealer from Latvia. After their marriage he continued to live in Latvia, she lived in Russia. She would go back and forth, and they sometimes traveled together. They loved each other truly.

Every summer her grandchildren, Katya and Nikita, stayed with her for three or four months. They had a very special connection. Katja remembers, "She was one of the most strongly willed people I knew. So self-directed, very admirable. She was incredibly playful with words, in Russian, and even in English. She taught us three things: Russian poetry—memorizing and performing the poems. And then music and astrology, which was a big part of her life. She was an astrologer and made a good living, good enough to travel the world often. When we were together she insisted that she was not grandma but that we were three siblings. She placed

herself in the middle, and she gave us new names, Rikki, Tikki, and Tak. She had strong feelings in churches, though we were not raised religiously. She loved apple trees very much; she loved dark Turkish coffee, which she would spike with chili.”

And from Nikita: “She had a lightness: she thought of herself as a companion, a peer, to us, not a guardian. We would wander around the forest together and pick fruit; she would stay with us on our level; it was really special. Her spirit of adventure! A year or two ago she came to visit California and spent time in San Francisco. There we would go on these long walks together, like we did in my childhood. We walked by a church, and as we passed, she ran up the stairs and pushed the door open. It was totally empty except for the organist who was practicing. We listened to this extraordinary music, enjoying the serendipity of the moment. Finding experiences like that made the city special for her: of course the door was open, of course we were able to go in...”

At certain point in her life, Olga began to travel. And that became like a religion. She went all over the world, to the most exotic countries. She pretty much covered the whole planet. She went to many worldwide meetings. She trusted and respected Robert—she definitely had her own relationship with him. Once she was at a meeting in Vienna, and she was standing very close to him, and with a very intense energy, and Robert said, “You mother has a light bulb in her third eye.”

She always told us that she just wanted to live until she was 84; anything more would be a bonus. That was because she was an astrologer and her favorite planet was Uranus, and in that year Uranus would complete its cycle around the sun. She said that she would complete the full cycle and die at 84, and she did. She was very precise.

When she learned that she had cancer, she refused chemo. She said she wanted to live as long as she's given now, but live fully. She knew what she wanted. She was sick only at the very end.

When she was told she had two months to live, she didn't say, “Oh, my God, what am I going to do.” She bought a ticket to the place she loved most, in the mountains of Spain, called Montserrat, and went there with her husband. She was already very weak and in pain, but after Spain they went by bus through France and Germany, visiting all the countries that she loved. And then she went back to Moscow, where she lived in an apartment alone. And she was dreading that she would die alone, she didn't want that. But her courage was unbelievable. The family begged her to come here, but she said she had to put her apartment in order before she went on her final journey. She had tried to finish everything, with so much attention and order.

Because I didn't have a Russian visa, I flew to Riga and we arranged that she would meet me there. She took a 13-hour bus ride and walked across the border. There was no plan after that, but Olga absolutely wanted to come to Apollo. She said she wanted to die here. She called it "the Promised Land," and this was a change in her. She was always very independent, very solitary, not wanting to do what everybody else does. But as she came closer to dying, she became much more serious and focused.

And then she made it here, and it was a miracle, that she could make it through 20 hours on the plane, after that bus ride. But she was light, she was light. She was going to Apollo.

Olga had a very particular character, which was vivid and memorable, and full of strong interests, but in the process of dying these interests began to drop away. Art, poetry—she was endlessly reading poems but that had to go, too. She said to my daughter, "Astrology..." and made a gesture as if tossing it away. And last to go was her role as my mother. She let it go completely, everything went. She performed this labor of dying, laboring to be born into the unknown. She said, "It's theater without theater." She was already half in another world, and she was willing to speak about it, but there were no words to describe it. She said, "This is the most important time of my life."

She was still able to care for herself until her last day, and then she couldn't. Her last words were, "why, why." Robert said she was on her seventh life, and these two words indicated two more lifetimes. Also, I think she meant, why was she held here when she was ready to go, she wanted to get out of this body. Why prolong it? She was not holding to anything. She was very ready, very courageous. She was laughing, even the last day, when we moved her into a hospital bed, saying, "Why all this? I don't need this."

A student who spent time with her just before she died said, "What struck me the most was her sweetness, acceptance, and gratitude. She kept repeating 'thank you' whenever something was done for her. "

She died peacefully in the night between the 20th and 21st of August. Card 21—I thought, "She has eternal youth now." It was very beautiful timing. She died exactly as she wanted, when she wanted, where she wanted. She managed to die at Apollo. It was the gift of the gods. She said that she wants to be remembered as "a joyful traveler." And that is what is written on her plaque.

[Reading: Pushkin]
(Reader: Nikita)

From Pushkin:

Russian:

На холмах Грузии лежит ночная мгла;
Шумит Арагва предо мною.
Мне грустно и легко; печаль моя светла;
Печаль моя полна тобою,
Тобой, одной тобой... Унынья моего
Ничто не мучит, не тревожит,
И сердце вновь горит и любит — оттого,
Что не любить оно не может.

English:

Upon the hills of Georgia lies the murk of night;
The Aragva river churns before my eyes
Such sadness and such ease; my sorrow's light,
My sorrow's filled with you, and you alone.
Nothing torments nor troubles my melancholy,
And my heart burns and loves anew
because it knows no other way

[Minister's Conclusion:]

The death of a friend reminds us of the fragile and temporary nature of our lives and increases our love and gratitude for one another.

May Olga's fearless joy and openness toward new people and adventures encourage our own exploration;

May her deep love and valuation for the highest achievements of art and culture inspire us to strive for excellence; and

May the clarity, simplicity, and courage with which she faced her death be with us when we face our own demise.

Dear Olga, we thank thee.

Minister:

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

[Minister moves to altar table.]

Candle Ceremony

With this candle to light our way, let us all join in raising a glass to Olga, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the gift of life allotted to each of us.

[Toast: Rowena]

“Let us toast to our dear friend Olga, whose soul lifted us with her high, sweet, solar energy. We thank thee!”