

Berkeley, February 19, 2017

Dear John - liebster Freund,

When I came by that Friday, you were asleep in your bed – you had left already, my dreams had told me so. I dare to say that every person at your memorial – and all the others who could not make it – has a love letter to you in her or his heart. Did you know how beloved you were?

I'll never forget seeing the light in your eyes when I visited you at the loft for the first time after the accident in 1997. I knew right away that a new door had opened and you were ready to walk this unknown path. Your life was changed radically, from being on the road almost all the time to learning to walk again, and making friends with your constant numbness, spasms and pains. Inspired by this light in your eyes, I offered, and you allowed yourselves to be taught a new way of moving in the world, literally and metaphorically.

After months of private lessons in Chi Gung and T'ai Chi principles, which I tailored for your battered body's needs, I invited you to join my class. Your dedication, determination, and humility continue to leave me awe-struck and moved. Most amazingly, over the course of 19 years you hardly ever missed a Monday evening. You became part of the Tai chi family; and you are missed and remembered dearly.

You and I had an expansive almost mystical friendship – we could sit in silence, or talk for hours, listen to music, read to each other, soak in wild hot springs, advise, help, console, and delight each other. The commitment was deep and lasting.

One of your many gifts was that of a good listener. It made you the astute observer, the exquisite, tuned-in cameraman, the elegant and poetic presence that knew how to dazzle people with your adventure stories.

I know the world leans toward remembering you mostly for your daredevil style of life. Well, to me, you became the “**true hero**” in the way you navigated your disability. Your deepest strengths showed, you were brave and dignified at once. You practiced experiencing life each precious moment to the fullest, and remembering what is important – slicing tomatoes very thinly, making French toast, a bemused smile and nod, and your famous twinkle in the eye – love...

The last 20 years of your life became a spiritual and more inward journey, oriented toward family, and steeped in tenderness. You kept moving toward the horizon, till you had done it. May you be at peace. May you know how beloved you are.

With much love and deep gratitude,  
mit viel Liebe und Dankbarkeit,

Deine Freundin Karina