

In 1986, my brother Carl invited me to join him in a joint excursion to Europe. Due to pressures of time and money, I declined, never dreaming that he was HIV positive. This is the letter he wrote after his first bout with pneumonia at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He died on January 9, 1988.

As executor of his estate I give permission to all future productions to reprint Carl's letter in the accompanying program. I would appreciate letting him speak to us in his own words.

*The Baltimore Waltz* – a journey with Carl to a Europe that exists only in the imagination – was written during the summer of 1989 at the MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire.

*- Paula Vogel*

March 1987

Dear Paula:

I thought I would jot down some of my thoughts about the (shall we say) production values of my ceremony. Oh God – I can hear you groaning – everybody wants to direct. Well, I want a good show, even though my role has been reduced involuntarily from player to prop.

First, concerning the choice between a religious ceremony and a memorial service. I know the family considers my Anglican observances as irrelevant as Shinto. However, I wish prayers in some recognizably traditional form to be said, prayers that give thanks of the Creator for the gift of life and the hope of reunion. For

reasons which you appreciate, I prefer a woman cleric, if possible, to lead the prayers. Here are two names: Phebe Coe, Epiphany Church; the Rev. Doris Mote, Holy Evangelists. Be sure to make a generous contribution from the estate for the cleric.

As for the piece of me I leave behind, here are your options:

- 1) Open casket, full drag.
- 2) Open casket, bum up (you'll know where to place the calla lilies, won't you?).
- 3) Closed casket, interment with the grandparents.
- 4) Cremation and burial of my ashes.
- 5) Cremation and dispersion of my ashes in some sylvan spot.

I would really like good music. My tastes in these matters run to the highbrow: Fauré's "Pie Jesu" from his *Requiem*, Gluck's "Dance of the Blessed Spirits" from *Orfeo*, "La Vergine degli Angeli" from Verdi's *Forza*. But my favorite song is "I Dream of Jeannie," and I wouldn't mind a spiritual like "Steal Away." Also, perhaps "Nearer My God to Thee." Didn't Jeanette MacDonald sing that di-vinely in *San Francisco*?

Finally, would you read or have read, A. E. Housman's "Loveliest of Trees"?

Well, my dear, that's that. Should I be lain with Grandma and Papa Ben, do stop by for a visit from year to year. And feel free to chat. You'll find me a good listener.

Love,

Brother