

FOR TIM

Delivered by Kathy Gergel Griffith

May 30, 2004

By the Chagrin River on Milann Drive in Willoughby Hills

Tim was a child of nature. A gentle, sensitive soul. He was most at home among the plants and flowers and so it was not surprising that he requested to be returned to nature by the river he so loved as a boy.

When Tim returned to Cleveland in the summer of 2001, we were able to get him a room at the hospice center near Euclid Hospital on Lake Shore Blvd. He was so happy with his room there because he could see the lake and beautiful plants and flowers outside his window. And he could tell you the name of every bush and plant too. After his medical assessment he was moved to St. Augustine Manor in Lakewood. He was placed in a room, in a bed by the door. He could not see out the window. And there was little to see. Though he was to receive excellent care there, I could tell by the look in his eyes when we moved him in that it was not the best place in his mind for him to be.

In September Tim made a decision and called Steve and me to tell us that he would not continue the medical treatments which were sustaining his life. He wished only pain management and he asked me if there was a way that I could get him back to the hospice center. And so September 11th is linked in my mind not only with the terrible tragedy in New York, but with making phone calls to try to get Tim a place back at the hospice center – back near the lake. Unfortunately it was impossible.

Tim could not imagine life without being able to touch the plants and flowers he loved. Tim loved poetry and this poem by e.e. cummings reflects his spirit.

*I thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes*

*(I who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)*

*how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any-lifted from the no
of all nothing-human merely being
doubt unimarginably You?*

*(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

I am glad that we can open Tim's ears and eyes again today and rejoin him with nature. And I think it is no coincidence that it is a beautiful, sunny day.

Now before we disperse his ashes, please join me in prayer:

*Because God has chosen to call our brother Tim from this life to himself,
We commit his body to the earth,
For we are dust and unto dust we shall return.*

*But the Lord Jesus Christ will change our mortal bodies to be
Like his in glory,
For he has risen, the firstborn from the dead.*

*So let us commend our brother to the Lord,
That the Lord may embrace him in peace and raise up his body on the last day.*