

TEA WITH ELISABETH

Dear Robert,

It is with deep gratitude and heart-felt appreciation that we share with you the current status of *TEA WITH ELISABETH*.

We are currently sending out galley proofs for fact checking as 97% of the Commentaries are in-house and edited.

Our dearest dreams and desires for this book are being realized through the powerful poignant, insightful and inspirational memories of the contributors.

The cover copy reads: "A collective portrait of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, M.D. one of the great heroic souls of this century, by best-selling authors, well-known colleagues, associates, family and friends."

Those who knew her will find some of the puzzling pieces of her life falling into place. Those who didn't know her will discover the human side of an individual whose gifts drew her to a destiny of global proportions.

We are working with Elisabeth's longtime New York agent Barbara Hogenson, and with her guidance are asking you to review the galley proofs and make any factual changes, as well as to read and sign the necessary Permission Agreement. The galley proofs (with or without changes) and Permission Agreements will be provided to the publishers.

Robert, we were touched by your shared memories of Elisabeth, and honored, blessed and inspired by your generosity of spirit. We know Elisabeth is pleased by all of this. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Love and Blessings,

Fern Stewart Welch
Rose Winters
Kenneth Ross

[Photo]

Coincidence or Cosmic Dance?

By Robert Singleton

[Embraced in the loving dynamic of Elisabeth's workshop, a soul is freed to come out and accept who he truly is, and to assist his friends as they seek a peaceful death.]

In the early 1980s, a friend handed me a magazine article about a remarkable, enlightened woman named Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. I was greatly moved by her words, so I remembered her name.

In 1986, a radio reporter friend welcomed me as a tagalong when he went to interview Elisabeth at her home. We ended up spending the entire day in her Virginia kitchen talking, laughing and eating the wonderful food she prepared.

By rural standards, we were practically neighbors, and I wanted to return Elisabeth's hospitality, so as I was leaving I invited her to my home to see my paintings. I presumed she was quite busy, and I left with no expectation that I'd hear from her anytime soon.

A week later, to my surprise, Elisabeth called and said she'd like to take me up on my invitation. On February 22, 1986, just as a heavy snow started to fall, she arrived at my front door with a friend.

After dinner we went into the studio for a presentation of my recent works. As I displayed the paintings one at a time, I explained them this way: "These are simply a documentation of my own journey toward the light. You'll notice that in each the source of the light is slightly obscured, just out of sight. With each successive painting you seem to be moving closer to the source of the light-yet the source is never revealed."

Elisabeth asked if I would ever paint the source of the light, and I answered. "Oh no! I don't think I'm good enough to paint the source of the light. Hopefully I'll see it when I die." Elisabeth said no more to me about the subject.

By the time I'd shown all the paintings, it was snowing quite heavily and I urged my guests to spend the night. Later that evening, Elisabeth's friend came to me in private and repeated what Elisabeth had said to him: "You know, it's amazing, he has already seen the light and doesn't even know it. The light is in all of his work."

The next morning, as they prepared to leave, Elisabeth invited me to come as her guest to one of her Life, Death and Transition workshops. She said, "I want you to see the work I do."

Arrangements were made, and I attended the five-day workshop. The intensity of Elisabeth's work was life-altering for me. What a catharsis!

I "came out" publicly in front of a hundred people. Previously, this act would have required panicky courage.

However, in an atmosphere of unconditional love and safety, a dynamic was created for me to share openly that denied part of whom I am. One hundred people compassionately and unconditionally accepted me as a human being, and through that unconditional love I learned to accept myself.

Finally, after nearly 50 years of denial, my sexuality was no longer an issue for me. I was freed to be myself with no condemnation. I was spiritually healed. I owe all of this--singularly--to Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

Elisabeth soon invited me to join the board of directors for the Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Center, and I served until the center's 1995 closing. During those years I got to know this exceptional human being as a colleague and personal friend. I grew increasingly protective of her name and her mission for humanity, and I was careful never to take advantage of this privileged friendship, nor to burden her with my personal problems. However, on three occasions I specifically asked for her wisdom and comfort. In each case, it was out of love for a lifelong friend who was nearing death from AIDS.

Elisabeth always responded. Amidst her busy schedule, traveling worldwide, she stopped being Dr. Ross, and as if she was an old friend, called my ailing loved ones. I witnessed those conversations and saw my friends' faces light up. Despite never having met her, they spoke to her with such ease, and they smiled as if sharing a secret. She knew them and knew their journey quite beyond mortal understanding.

Many of Elisabeth's teachings have become integrated into the everyday life and lexicon of this culture. Her personal authorship of this wisdom seems to have been lost along the way, her genius plagiarized on too many occasions. Yet, I suspect, if I were able to tell her of my concern, the consternation on my face would be met with a wry and knowing smile on hers.

Elisabeth came into my life at a fate-full moment. She awakened me to self-love and out of that came the strength and insight to assist others in a finding not only their own source of infinite love but also the peace to make their transition.

I've covered a mountainside on my property with the ashes of too many of my friends lost to this disease known as AIDS. It is my honor to provide them a resting place away from a world that judged them so unfairly.

Because Elisabeth helped me find my own strength and the courage to accept myself, I could be there for them on their last journey. I thank her for allowing me to give her and her loving counsel as a grace-filled final gift to those loved ones.

Some might say I met Dr. Elisabeth Kubler Ross by chance. I don't think so. AIDS was about to become an epidemic, and many soldiers would step forth, with Elisabeth leading the battle against rampant ignorance and prejudice. As I heard Elisabeth say many times, "There is no such thing as coincidence." With all my heart I believe we met by means of a cosmic, sacred dance, choreographed long before we knew each other's names.

Tea With Elisabeth

Robert Singleton

Robert Singleton is internationally acclaimed for his artwork featuring spiritual light. His work is represented internationally in prestigious private and public collections.

For the past 30 years, he has lived on a remote mountaintop in West Virginia where he was a neighbor and close friend of Dr. Kubler-Ross, and served as a member of her board of directors for 10 years.

In 1995, Robert Singleton founded Russell House, a sanctuary for those living with HIV/AIDS, and those who care for them.