

Unterbirkholz, July 28, 2016

Dear Anya Hakima,

We just heard the news that you changed this life for a more eternal life.

We cannot really believe it, nor fathom the depth of this news.

As we know from our mutual teacher Inayat Khan, death is 'just' a passing, a letting go of this mortal coil, a rite of passage to another, better and more eternal life. This is one of his most difficult teachings, because it is impossible to experience or feel the reality behind these words. You can only accept them on authority of one who probed deeper, much deeper than we probably ever will be able to. You now know what it is like, this passage. Maybe one day or one night, you come to one of us to tell us what it is like. Until then, we have to live with our memories of you.

There are so many that they tumble over one another. We met some twenty years ago after the first Russian Solstice Festival and immediately became close. In these early days, your English was not so good, but somehow we always found ways to understand each other and have deep and meaningful conversations and sharing. Over the years, we followed what happened to you and your family; we lived with your sorrows over your son Simon and were impressed by your loyalty and faithfulness towards your family. You often seemed to care more for them than for yourself. Yes, you certainly got a big slice from the darker side of life.

Still, you managed to radiate in your typical Anya way, braving the clouds with a laugh, putting things in perspective without becoming superficial, even when your year's savings of thousand dollars were stolen from you.

Later, we initiated you in the train from Moscow to Saratov. At the same time, you initiated us in Russian train-lore, just as you initiated us in the ways to deal with Russian authorities, whether it was a wallet, stolen at a Moscow market (already 13 years ago), or the way to obtain our tourist permit to stay in Moscow for a week. You showed us the Moscow not many tourists will ever get to see, but most of all you showed us how to cope with living in Russia and how to cope with life in general.

Thinking of you, at least two more qualities stand out. You were blessed with a unique way of looking at people with your all-revealing radar-eyes that could look right through a person. This gave you a keen psychological insight that lifted many a veil and granted us a glance at how people really are. Hence your Sufi name Haqima (the truthful one), a name that you carried with female grace, the grace that always has been one of your qualities, both inner and outer. The second quality is your humor and bright side, combined with – by lack of a better word – 'naughtiness'. One year, we groomed you for your trip to England. You learned not to mention the word 'toilet', but had to ask 'where you can wash your hands'. In your inimitable wit, you immediately asked where dogs have to wash their hands.

How sharp is the contrast with more recent years, when these sunny qualities were overshadowed by a relationship that somehow was hard to end, even though many friends told you to do so. I guess your radar eyes helped other people more than they helped you yourself. You showed a fear, even a paranoia that we never before experienced with you.

When you were not accompanying us on our trips to Russia, Domodedovo Airport often was our meeting point where – MU MU – you shared with us some of your sorrows, worries and problems. The last time was this year April, a mere three months ago. We were transiting airplanes; you seemed to be transiting your life and we were happy for you.

As we now know, it was the last time in this earthly reality. We know from the Bible that love is stronger than death. Your death makes these words an experience and a reality, for death cannot end twenty years of love and friendship. You will always be our friends and we won't stop loving you. Just as we know that, from the other world, you send us your love. You set a seal upon our hearts and we are grateful for having been so close to you.

Your dear friends,

Wali & Ariënné