

I remember that twinkle in his eyes

I remember Bobby Todd as a little kid in a navy peacoat and cap standing beside Debby in a red coat and hat, with Dean and Pippa beside them, also in their “good coats.” None of them were as tall as the black iron doorknob on our our red front door that snowy Christmas day.

I remember these four slouching and giggling on our blue sofa, and about five years later as they performed circus acts for Andrew’s birthday party in our front yard on Woodbrook Road. I remember the day Bob and Dean went off to Boy Scout Camp, and even more clearly the day that neither Pat nor I remembered to go meet the bus that brought them back to Westchester County at the end of camp. I do *not* remember how they ever got home!

I remember another summer when he went to a high school music camp and wrote to ask Pat to please bring lots of broccoli and other vegetables on parents’ weekend.

I remember learning to call him Robert or Rob, and how it took him many adult years to be able to call me Anne and not Mrs. Seltzer – something his siblings managed much sooner than he.

I remember his graduation from Tufts, when the whole Todd family and I went back to Rob’s apartment and he insisted we each choose one of his paintings. He insisted I take several that I cherish, and also one the big charcoal figures he was drawing then for each of my kids.

I remember our families’ annual Christmas get-togethers in Pleasantville and Rye, then in Chappaqua and Madison, as the kids went on through high school and to college and beyond.

I remember loving Tessa from the moment I met her, and their perfect, joyous, musical wedding on a different family farm than the one where we gathered yesterday to celebrate Rob’s life.

I remember how all his life I maneuvered to sit beside him whenever possible, because I knew our conversations would touch on topics that might wind up being silly or sublime, or maybe just something in between.

I remember going to his art shows, and later on to a Robert Todd screening at the Film Forum. That was when I realized he was a hero to his students and other film buffs, even though he still looked like a student himself. He spoke to them with affection and some tips and of course some sly asides.

I remember Rob in the context of his art, his films, his easy rapport with anyone of any age or inclination, and his many totally unstylish outfits. His khaki pants and navy blazer at Lucas’ memorial service made him look so totally establishment, and his borrowed blue blazer got very wet when I sobbed all over it that day.

I remember him surrounded by his talented, brilliant, musical, loving family.

Always I will remember him and honor his memory and be thankful he shared his gentleness and insights and love and imagination with me, and that he didn’t mind that he was light years ahead of me in most of the topics we’d talk about together.

When I think of him, that Robert Todd twinkle in his eyes will always pop into my mind first.

*from Anne Seltzer
9/24/18 (Rob’s 55th birthday)*