

Maria Schulten

*July 14, 1934 – September 13, 2024*

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Minister: Graylin

September 19, 2024

**[Reading: “The Swan” by Rainer Maria Rilke]**  
(Reader: Graylin)

The Swan

This labor through which the still unborn must pass  
Bound and heavily weighed down,  
Is like the awkward walking of the swan.  
And death, where we no longer comprehend  
The very ground on which we daily stand  
Is like her anxious letting herself go,  
Into the water, soft against her breast,  
Which now how easily flows behind her  
In a wake of waves.  
While she, infinitely silent, glides on  
In her majestic way.

**[Minister’s Introduction]**

Good afternoon, dear friends, we have gathered in this place made sacred by those who are laid to rest here. We have come to bear witness to the mortal woman who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of her name, and to the immortal soul which has transcended that role.

Let us please stand to honor her with our silent presence.

*(Silence)*

Thank you.

The physical body is designed to produce presence and being, and then to be laid aside. From Walt Whitman, “The best of me then, when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly preparing.”

Ria has taken with her the presence that she gained in this lifetime, and her connection with Influence C. Our teacher reminds us, “That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough.”

**[MINISTER: Eulogy – Prepared by Edward S.]**

Ria was born on July 14, 1934 in Delft, Holland. As the first child of eight, her birth was greatly celebrated by her family. By the age of ten, she began taking on the care of her two younger siblings, as these were the difficult war years in Holland. This was not an easy task for her. This allowed her to grow strong mentally, though her body was a bit frail. She also became the godmother of the family's seventh child, Edward, coaching him during his younger years. This created the bond between them which lasted until her parting a few days ago.

Much later, she raised two children, Tycho and Thera, while simultaneously creating a very successful children's fashion brand. This made her into a strong woman. She also grew to love good food and became a great chef among her other avid pursuits.

After the passing of her husband Hans, and with their children blossoming and becoming independent, she now had lots of time to feed her spiritual side. She pursued several directions, but in the end she came across the philosophy of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. This would become her path.

Her decision to come to Apollo and leave everything behind at age 77 came as an enormous surprise to Edward and Lidia, who were living in Holland at the time, but preparing to return to Apollo themselves. Her words were, "Well then I will join and move with you to Apollo." Objections or discussions were not tolerated!

Her time at Apollo was actively filled with exploring the teaching and the life of the school. She quickly became devoted to her fellow students and wished to gather their wisdom, as well as share the wisdom that she had gathered over her long life. She developed a fast and unshakable connection with the teacher. Despite her advanced years, she chose challenging third-line octaves at the Galleria, first working with flowers then additionally helping with food preparation in the kitchen. Working there for a few years, she met students who would become her close friends until the very end of her life.

Her second-line encounters, while they could at times become contentious, produced outcomes overall which helped her to strengthen, broaden and deepen connections to her true friends.

It would be her first line of work that would become her focus, when her health became too much of a hindrance for her to remain actively in circulation at Apollo. Becoming more solitary seemed to give her the opportunity to absorb the teaching

purely, unhurriedly, and reposefully. She viewed as many meetings and cultural events as she could navigate virtually. Those who knew her best could see her blossoming into a new person, as she neared the end of her life. She was infused with gratitude towards the school, the Gods and her fellow students. The teacher has said, “Everyone who has died in the school has had a very successful life.” Ria’s life bears witness to this. Many gathered here at her burial knew her well and appreciated her for all that she was. She flew away and now only asks us to celebrate her flying and our own current life.

**[Music: IL SILENZIO Melissa Venema, trumpet soloist (recorded)]**

**[Burial: During the musical selection]**

**[Minister signals to the pallbearer, Edward, who places the urn in the ground.]**

**[Minister’s Conclusion:]**

Now we release Ria to her and our true home. From earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust. Words fade in the face of a great reality. We too, arrive at this simplest, most profound moment, our friend Ria showing us the way.

In Rabia’s words, “Love comes from eternity and goes into eternity.” A divine spark has returned to its divine source. The circle of life is complete!

Let us go joyfully now to celebrate Ria’s life with a toast, mindful of the gift of life still allotted to each of us.

**[Participants move to the table for the toast.]**

**[Toast: Graylin)**