


“Up into the silence of the green  
silence with a white earth in it  
you will (kiss me) go  
out into the morning the young  
morning with a warm world in it  
(kiss me) you will go  
on into the sunlight the fine  
sunlight with a firm day in it  
you will go (kiss me  
down into your memory and  
a memory and memory  
i) kiss me (will go)”

- e. e. cummings

“One life is but  
a grain of sand  
in an ocean  
of infinite memories;  
A life touched  
by one loving heart,  
shall rise  
above the shores.”

- Mark Bulbrook

**The End.**



“Always reaching,  
relentless in surviving;  
Never ending...  
I may as well try and  
catch the wind”

- Mark Bulbrook

One Last Word...

“Ample make this bed.  
Make this bed with awe;  
In it wait till judgment break  
Excellent and fair”

- Emily Dickinson

## Mark Bulbrook

May 2, 1956 - June 30, 2005

Mark's love of writing was demonstrated through his words of inspiration. He once wrote that he believed there was no greater complement than to be remembered as "a fine man." He considered those three words as the summation of all a man represented to those who knew him. Mark was a philosopher. He viewed the events of his life as necessary steps along a path furnished with adversity, joy, disappointment and unique opportunity. During the more difficult phases, he once proclaimed, "If not for bad luck, I would have no luck at all." But in reality, Mark did not believe in coincidence. He believed that every event, every moment was necessary to form the future and there was a purpose, a reason for everything. He was concerned as he grew older that he was also growing cynical. He began to question his beliefs and the purpose for some of society's most painful trials. His greatest difficulty was witnessing the pain and suffering of children. His years spent as a young patient in St. Joseph's Hospital left him with a lifetime of flashback memories of loneliness with the bitterness of the night. He took all of those experiences and used them to guide him in all that he did throughout his life. A life spent assisting those who could not help themselves. A life of writing words of inspiration and trying to create an environment of contentment for his family and his friends. He will be remembered for his creative "Survivor Saturday's" and "Extreme Weekends." His creativeness was evident in much of what he did. His creativeness and determination helped raise \$18,000.00 for ovarian cancer research when he organized the Tee-Fore-Kathy Golf Tournament. Mark was the Co-Chairperson of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS for the Ontario Minister of Health: The Chairperson of the Central Western Region of Hemophilia Ontario: Vice-President of Hemophilia Ontario: Executive Director of the Hamilton AIDS Network and Ontario AIDS Network. Mark wrote and directed "A Night of Sight & Sound" - An Evening of AIDS Awareness - for the city of Hamilton at Mohawk College Theatre. He wrote the lyrics to the title track of a 21 song compilation CD, "Room of Human Quilt." He had over 60 articles published in the Hamilton Spectator. He was the founder of the Hamilton Wentworth Regional HIV Advisory Committee, an AIDS activist and an advocate for compensation for victims of tainted blood. He testified at the Krever Inquiry with his own tough questions, helping to set the tone of the inquiry for the next 2 years. For his family, Mark was a beloved husband, a respected father and a loving grandpa. For Mark, his life's purpose was his wife Colleen, their children, Mathew, Jennifer & Jessica and grandsons Caleb and Lukas. For all of us, Mark Bulbrook was indeed a fine man.



Mark's Family

## The Last Waltz

Monday July 4, 2005

- "Take This Waltz"* - Leonard Cohen
- "Carolina in My Mind"* - James Taylor
- One Last Word:** - Written by: Mark Bulbrook  
Read by: Rev. Mr. Ron Bulbrook
- "Room of Human Quilt"* - Lyrics by: Mark Bulbrook  
Dedicated to: Colleen Bulbrook  
Music by: Lorraine White
- "Every Grain of Sand"* - Bob Dylan
- A Personal Note:** - Mr. Michael Sobota
- "Sisters of Mercy"* - Leonard Cohen
- "Ave Maria"* - Celine Dion
- "Souvenirs"* - John Prine

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### Pallbearers

Mr. Ed Rizzo  
Mr. Charlie Guthro  
Mr. Mike Stephenson

Mr. Paul Walsh  
Mr. Dave Smith  
Mr. Dave Chapell

### Spiritual Readers

Mrs. Diane Bulbrook  
Mrs. Sandy Guthro

Mrs. Mary Wynia  
Mrs. Teresa Stephenson

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To each and every one of you, never underestimate your purpose nor underestimate your impact: A life touched by one loving heart shall rise above the shores. I have had a life filled with kindness.

Until I met my best friend, I was half the person I am today. The old phrase, “your better half” has never rung more true than with the example of Colleen and I. She represents the dignity, the bravado and the spirit of our marriage. Colleen has not just been the most pivotal person in my life but meeting her was also the most significant moment in my life. Throughout my life with her, she has demonstrated unconditional love, loyalty and support. She has displayed incredible energy, sacrifice and courage, all in the face of adversity, hard work and unwanted challenges. Colleen is the person I always strived to be but never quite achieved. My ability to survive and conquer was only possible because I was able to do so with Colleen’s presence. There can be no greater love on this earth as the love I leave with her. My gratitude for her cannot be expressed in these few words. Her love is my legacy. Without her presence I would have no past.

How can I tell my children adequately that I am so very proud and honoured to have had the ultimate experience of being their father. Mathew, Jennifer and Jessica have brought to me a greater understanding of the true measure of success. It is through their successes and accomplishments as human beings that I can only truly measure my own successes. It is without question that being a dad is the most important job on this earth, parallel to the job of being a mom. Our responsibilities as parents to our children were always paramount in our lives. Each of you have brought love into my life. While there were times of learning, each of you have so very much to offer this world. I know you will do so as you find the path, seek direction and step forward on your own life’s journey. May you do so with the love of God, the health of excellence and the knowledge, that you do so with your dad never really farther away than a prayer or a thought.

While Caleb is still too young to understand the finality of death, may he always remember and grow knowing, that his existence within my life enriched me and offered me the fulfillment that I needed to continue on. Through the devotion of his mom, he will gain the spirit he needs to imagine, to dream, to do. He must always remember he does so with the love of his grandpa at his side.



It’s late. The page is full. It’s closing time. Time to rest: Find that soft seat atop a cloud. Comfort at last. Stay well; Live well. I offer you my peace and my love. I’ll see you in my dreams.

- With love, Mark

## One Last Word

**B**ecause of my everlasting need to have the last word, I offer you, with a slice of philosophy, a sprinkle of humour and a heaping of gratitude, a few final thoughts.

This is not my first attempt at leaving you with this written material. The first time I sat down and wrote this piece was about ten years ago. Each year following the next since 1985, I have never been too sure if the future for me meant one year, one month or perhaps even one week. While procrastination has always been my weakest link, I was at least of sound mind to realize that putting this off would be the most final act of procrastination I could kick myself for. I needed to write that last article, the one that turns the final page of my epilogue. Recognizing that one life is but a grain of sand in an ocean of infinite memories, I tried to live life so that my history could be recalled without strain and that I would be remembered, if for nothing else, at the very least, as a fine man

The problem of course with writing about those you love and those who have inspired you in advance of your own mortality, is you never know what the future unfolds. Ten years after writing the original copy of this, fate, loss and the unpredictability of life, has forced me to edit, delete and alter my initial writings. I never dreamt I would out-live so many in such a short period of time. But life’s like that. I suppose if one waits long enough, one will indeed come to realize that all things must pass in order for the future to catch up.

The privilege of life does not come without some cost. The cost of loss is profound and without measure. Throughout my lifespan, I have witnessed many losses. The loss of friends, colleagues and peers throughout the AIDS community has been significant to my own mental health. I learned some time ago that multiple loss can stun your ability to evolve with freshness, with vim. Or, it can offer you multitudes of strength that delves deep from within your soul, presenting virtues of determination you never realized you possessed.



I have reached for the stars but at times found only the emptiness of space. I have sought music but on occasion, heard only the scratch of a broken violin. I have searched the pastures of laughter and found only a meadow of freshly cut tears. I yearned for life, all the while challenged by death. But at the end of the day, I discovered the journey.

The journey is always worth traveling. Reaching the finish line is much less important than the path you choose to get there.

If I have ever offended, hurt or caused you sadness, I apologize. For the times when perhaps I did not offer you my hand or extend to you my whole self, I ask for your understanding. For the times when my presence did not enhance or brighten your own existence, I only ask that you take with you the knowledge that it is you who made my life more complete.

The poker face has been deliberate. The silence that sometimes swept the room was purposeful. I wasn't always representative of laughter and at times I couldn't muster the smile that some looked for but couldn't find. I was forever mindful of those moments. But I was always reaching, relentless in surviving, seemingly never ending. At times my life felt like I may as well try and catch the wind. Grabbing air may have proved easier than finding that smile. But more often, I basked in the belief that my life was full and that I was living far beyond just surviving. For that I am proud. For the other, I am sorry to all who had to endure the moments of my self-pity. I did what I could with what I had. It was people who pulled me out of the sand, who placed me above the shores.

My life was designed in two levels: Two phases. Before and after: Pre & post. Prior to and after HIV infection. For me, my life has been a profound experience of learning, loving, giving, receiving and losing. I cannot not tell you I believe my life was great. It was not great. Parts of my life were a sequence of disappointments, lonely, stressful and relentless with its uncertainty. Sometimes the pain was more than I was prepared to accept. But accept I did and the events and the people that shaped my life, are all responsible for taking misery and turning it into joy. Where there was once tears, there became laughter. Where there was once loneliness, came companionship. Where there was once finality, entered eternity. I suppose if I have learned anything in this lifetime it is that no man is an island. I could not have existed with productiveness, with contentment and with a sense of satisfaction had I existed alone.



The presence of friends within my life has sustained me. You brought normalcy to a life less normal. You brought me light and warmth by your mere existence and willingness to share your time with me. I discovered a very long time ago, while playing in isolation as a child in a lonely backyard on Crocket Street, that a friend is essential

As a young boy, my best friend was my brother Michael. During our younger years, Michael and I shared a life that barely escaped the womb. We required the protection of a maternal safety net. We set out on a journey of self discovery that took us to a level of understanding that only the two of us could truly appreciate. He assisted me in choosing tolerance over intolerance and he demonstrated the satisfaction of choosing the underdog rather than the victor. Michael rowed his own boat and he reached shore before many others who sat back and let the motor do the work. Early on, through Michael, I discovered who I was, setting a path for where I would eventually travel.

If I spent five lifetimes searching, I could never find a more loving, respectful and compassionate family than the one I was so fortunate to be born into. Together we shared the wonder of birth, the finality of death and the joy of life. My parents defined for all of us the richness of ethics, the principles of duty and the meaning of unconditional love. My father's style is something worth emulating: His character unwavering. It is with the anticipated hope and faith that I will once again rest in the arms of my mom that makes dying less frightening. A 38 year void left in my heart by her absence will finally be mended.

My sisters and brothers are of all from the same mould. While their individual styles separate them from one another, they have all shared the same devotion, love and affection that made and makes them the finest siblings I could have ever wished for. Too many gone too soon. Earth lost some of its richest treasures that it cannot recover. The absence of their future contributions, in a world that so badly needs people like them, is indeed a loss for all.

To my surviving sister Mary and brother Ron, continue on, far past the lonely separation of your family's physical presence. To a place where your heart realigns with your spirit. Where once again life is content and your direction is forward. Be steady. God's speed. You are the best.

I have felt like a man of many families. The Sisters of St. Joseph, especially Sr. Giovanni, are among my oldest and most loyal friends. Their profound kindness and tolerance is to be cherished forever: The nurses that took care of me so compassionately as a child, fed my soul and nourished my spirit during a time when I depended on them to keep me safe: Kept me alive. I never forgot them, not for one single day that remained.

Over the past several years, particularly these past several months, I have been more aware, more mindful of how truly blessed my life has been. Through my relationships with friends, family, colleagues and simple acquaintances, they have been there to share my successes, support my failures, celebrate my achievements and mourn my losses. Encircled by love, I have never been adrift. For that I am truly thankful and I know I have been blessed.