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SHEDDING TEARS FOR STYLE, CLASS, AND DIGNITY
(for Phil Stinebuck, 1951-2002)

Late yesterday afternoon I heard you'd moved on
My ears, I believed, must have deceived me;
I thought about you all night long
Recalling your songs:

Rolling softly through the world
Going for the gusto; forsaking the glory;
Making sure the work got done
But never forsaking the fun.

We sat and talked for years and years
Expressing our desires and fears.
Snowbound in Dallas
we planned a meeting:
Six months later we were greeting
Oklahoma's first statewide IL assembly
You made sure it was done with style and class
Bringing to our state attitudes and networking that would
last.

Rolling softly through the world
Going for the gusto; forsaking the glory;
Making sure the work got done
But never forsaking the fun.

I rode with you and another now-departed friend
from a meeting in Little Rock to another in
Tulsa; I watched you pour ice over your
body that wouldn't sweat and learned
again how much I had to learn about this world
I'd joined. You didn't complain; you just
explained. You had a gift for slicing through the
bull, without making anyone else feel they were null.

Rolling softly through the world
Going for the gusto; forsaking the glory;
Making sure the work got done
But never forsaking the fun.

I'm numb with this news
I've lost one of my oldest friends
in this movement; someone I worked with
and played with, too; someone who made sure
we worked when we started our new endeavor

and someone I hope I supported too when he took
off for new pastures. Finally, as I write, tears
begin to pool; losing you now just feels cruel.

Rolling softly through the world
Going for the gusto; forsaking the glory;
Making sure the work got done
But never forsaking the fun.

It's been awhile since we spoke
had a chance to exchange and joke;
I never felt out-of-touch
a phone call, an e-mail would bring us together again;
now it's not so. I'm still
processing this grief I feel
I'm sure you've brought your quiet dignity
to the next world you'll find.
We'll just have to sit back
and stay, look forward to
raising a glass with you another day
when all the martyrs who've left us here
we join one day. Til then I'll remember you:

Rolling softly through the world
Going for the gusto; forsaking the glory;
Making sure the work got done
But never forsaking the fun.

Steven E. Brown

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