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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