

October 23, 2011

Elliott Cherry
P.O. Box 6602
Portland, ME 04103

Dear Elliott,

Your performance of *A Finished Heart* at the University of Maine Black Box Theater last week was indeed powerful. I have spoken with numerous social work faculty and students who attended and, without exception, were all deeply moved by your piece.

Your artistic portrayal of this “most intimate” time in your relationship with Chris allowed the audience a real life view of many concepts with which we deal frequently in social work classes: self determination; loss; dignity; love, including same-sex love; relationships; negotiation; death; spirituality; empowerment; self-care; and authenticity. The music, poetry, and dramatic enactment of your final months with your beloved husband provided an unusual and effective vehicle for understanding the range of complicated emotions and states of being that a dying person and his or her care provider—in particular, one who is a life partner—may pass through.

I have no doubt that your performance will remain vivid in our minds for a long time. Whether as practicing social workers working with clients in hospice and other health care settings or as human beings experiencing loss of loved ones in our lives, we will be that much wiser and more prepared from having seen and heard your beautiful performance.

I want to thank you and Martin for sharing your time and talent with us. You have provided a very important learning tool through your art—a legacy of which I am sure Chris would have been very proud.

Most sincerely,



Sandy Butler, PhD
Professor and MSW Coordinator