



4115 N.Mississippi,
Portland,
OR 97217.

April 30, 2014.

We were very fortunate to have Elliott Cherry perform "A Finished Heart" here as part of the *eRa* Program at Q Center in April 2014. Q Center is the LGBTQ Community Center in Portland Oregon and the *eRa* (encouraging Respect for aging) Program specifically serves the senior LGBT folk, those who have lived a little longer than others. Many of our community have journeyed with spouses, partners, lovers, family members and their communities through the dying process, death and the grief of deep loss and Elliott's performance gave a profound opportunity for the audience to witness one man's deep creativity in his shared storytelling of the death of his beloved.

Elliott's performance is powerful, rich and raw – absolutely mesmerizing from start to finish – and the opportunity for discussion and conversation afterwards was a welcome bonus, a chance to go even more deeply into Elliott's own creative journey and also a chance for others to talk about their experiences of death, dying and loss. Elliott's gracious generosity and ease with this conversation and discussion was touching and insightful, revealing how intricately he has travelled his own and the larger worlds of loss and grief.

For the LGBT community Elliott's work is a special gift, bringing to life the loving relationship he and Chris shared for 16 years . . . bringing to *love* the *life*-full relationship he and Chris shared for 16 years. I know from conversations I had afterwards with the people who came to the performance that many found aspects their own stories in Elliott and Chris's narrative, and many experienced an important and welcome enrichment of their own heart-break and loss.

We are fortunate in Portland that Elliott is here, and is performing his work in the Pacific North West. *eRa* at Q Center is a grateful host, and our audience appreciative and illuminated by the performance. I am only sorry we did not get to meet Chris on this side of the continent.

Many thanks Elliott, and Chris,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan" followed by a small asterisk-like flourish.

Susan Kocen
eRa Senior Community Coordinator
Q Center
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