



Love and Light – Living in the presence before the execution

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The past two weeks have been a borderline experience for me. I was in Texas to spend time with my 35 year-old friend Robert Pruett, who had an execution date set for April 28th. I've known Robert the entire time he has been on death row, which is thirteen years.

Robert has learned to live in the present and not to worry about the future, as all we have is the present. This is the reason why he remained in peace as the day of his scheduled execution drew closer. His wish was to enjoy every minute of the all-day visits, as he said it was of no value to think about what would soon happen.

Robert's attitude helped me a lot in being able to remain in peace myself. I felt a silence around and within me and a strong light.

Even during the visit on Tuesday morning, which was supposed to be his last day in this realm, I remained calm. I wanted to be a lively and present companion to Robert, not one already mourning his death while he was still sitting in front of me alive. Also, I didn't want to impose emotions onto him that didn't match his own.

In the same state of mind, I found myself in the Hospitality House where the family and friends of the inmate gather in the afternoon of the execution day. Before my inner eyes I saw Robert embraced in light and love and peace.

It was amazing to me to watch myself remaining in peace in such a situation as well.

A little later at the Hospitality House, another energy mingled with my peace: it was when two chaplains explained in detail the steps the witnesses of the execution would go, in what room they would be waiting and what they would see through the window of the execution chamber. Not that anything was new to me: I'd read and heard about it all before. However, when they explained how they would pull the blanket over Robert's face after he was declared dead, it reached another level of reality. All of a sudden, it hit me in the face that they wouldn't care about Robert's peace and living in the present, but that they would in fact kill him. That, to me, was so much the opposite of how I perceived Robert's loving presence that listening to their descriptions left me breathless for a second.

It was not easy to remain in peace when Robert called in from the Walls Unit to the Hospitality House to have his last phone talks with everybody. He was still the charming and funny man he's always been as he said his last goodbyes to every person individually.

I remained in the inner silence until I learned that Robert's execution date had been withdrawn, then I started crying.

As early as next summer Robert could receive another execution date.