

CONTENTS

- 3 New York Times
- 4 Heavenly Rest Celebration
- 8 From Richard M. Furlaud
- 10 From Alec Magnet
- 12 Zit Cluster *by Alex Adam*
- 14 From Richard Adam
- 15 From Nick Adam
- 17 From Winky and Lazlo Adam
- 20 Homily by The Rev. Philippa A. Turner
- 22 Daily Princetonian
- 27 Princeton Memorial
- 31 Hymn1
- 32 Crushed *by Alex Adam*
- 36 From Julia Harman Cain
- 39 From Joyce Carol Oates
- 40 Hymn 2
- 41 From Nikki Fedennan
- 43 Princetonian: Classmates remember Adam '07
- 46 A Family Thanks
- 47 From John Nichols
- 49 From Bill William
- 50 Alex Jay Adam photo

ADAM - Alexander Jay, age 23, adored son of Winky and Laszlo and beloved older brother of Nick and Dash, died peacefully at home in New York City on January 25, 2007 after a two year battle with Ewings Sarcoma. Alex faced his long, painful illness with the same qualities with which he lived his life: courage, humor, grace and intelligence. A proud Old Boy of St. Bernard's School, Alex starred in many plays at Trinity School and Princeton University. He was a talented writer and a two-time winner of the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for Humor. We will miss his kindness and empathy as a son, a brother, and a friend, as well as the rare insight and wit with which he regarded the world and his place in it. He was funny. He was charming. He was unique. He touched people's hearts in a way that he himself did not fully understand. We will always love him.

In addition to his immediate family, Alex is survived by grandparents, aunts and uncles, and many cousins: The Furlaud, Rachofsky and Adam families.

A service in his memory will be held at the Church of Heavenly Rest on 5th Avenue at 90th street on Friday February 2' at 3 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center - Pediatric Division.

The New York Times - Sunday, January 28, 2007

A Celebration of the Life of

ALEXANDER JAY ADAM

January 11, 1984 – January 25, 2007



Friday, the second of February
in the year of our Lord two thousand and seven
at three o'clock in the afternoon
Church of the Heavenly Rest
New York City

THE HOLY GOSPEL – John 14:1-6

Gospeler: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

Gospeler: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE HOMILY

The Rev. Philippa A. Turner

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYERS

ANTHEM

"For the beauty of the earth"
St. Bernard's Singers

John Rutter

THE COMMENDATION

Prayer Book, page 499

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

HYMN 208

"The strife is over"

Victory

POSTLUDE

Fugue in E flat

Johann Sebastian Bach

*All are invited to a reception immediately following the service at
The House of the Redeemer
7 East 95th Street*

OFFICIANT
The Reverend Philippa A. Turner

ORGANIST
Mollie Nichols



From Richard M. Furlaud

ALEXANDER JAY ADAM

How does one measure the value of a life? Not, I submit, by wealth amassed, fame achieved, or honors bestowed. But rather, I believe, by the impact that the life had on those left behind.

Alex's life on earth was cut brutally short, but on those who knew him, his family and friends, it had an extraordinary impact. It is strange for one so old to say of one so young, but we learned much from Alex. We are better people because this wonderful young man beautiful inside and out - was in our lives.

Alex's charm and gift for making friends of everyone from his classmates at St. Bernard's, Trinity and Princeton, to the Doctors and Nurses at Memorial Sloan-Kettering, who tried so hard to save his life, showed how friendship can forge bonds between people bringing joy in good times and comfort in times of adversity.

Alex's writings, which received two national awards, demonstrated that one can be funny, witty and produce great comedy without ever being cruel, caustic or sarcastic.

Alex's hikes in Colorado and Alaska, and along the Appalachian Trail and his travels in China, where he studied Mandarin and played an occasional video game with Tibetan Monks, showed us how a thirst for knowledge and adventure can broaden the mind and elevate the spirit.

Alex taught us the importance of love of family. Alex's love for his wonderful parents and brothers was at the very core of his being. We all know that an illness such as his can tear a family apart. Because of the great love between Alex and his family, these family ties are now even stronger than ever.

And, we learned much from the courage and grace with which Alex faced his terrible illness. One example: Last summer, Alex was given a delayed birthday party. Though frail, he gave every appearance of having a fine time and of being in good spirits. No one could have guessed, that the very day before the party, the doctors had told him that all of the draconian treatment and operations over the past two years had failed, and that his days on earth were numbered.

We mourn the passing of this intelligent, insightful, sensitive, courageous, graceful and gallant young man. We mourn the books he would have written, the theatrical roles he would have played, and all the good in the world that he would have accomplished had he been given more time. And, we mourn the children he did not have and who would have carried on his genes.

But, we give thanks to Almighty God for having had Alex In our lives. And, we rejoice that he has been released from the pain and suffering of this earthy life and is now in Heaven.

Just as we know that infinity exists but cannot picture it, so we know that Alex has been called by the Lord, for reasons we cannot fathom, to a place we know Is there but cannot see.

But, I suspect that Alex is looking down on this gathering, not entirely displeased with being the center of all this attention, and, is, in fact, counting the house.

And, I know for sure, beyond any doubt whatsoever, that Alex has changed our lives for the better and that he will live forever In our minds and hearts.

Richard M. Furlaud

From Alec Magnet

Imagine Alex sitting on a chair, looking somehow both dignified and awkward, at the first and, as it turned out, only meeting of the writing club that he started with a few of our friends. The piece he presented was a monologue about how much he admired his younger brother Dash for handling his diabetes so well. And what I remember most vividly was the phrase Alex used to describe him - "Dash, the sickly little superman." (This was written some time ago; these days Dash is far from little).

But what strikes me about that image is how well it captures what was so unique and wonderful about Alex's vision of the world. He was able to see clearly the reality of other people's experience, especially the difficult, the painful, the embarrassing, and the awkward. And in his writing, his jokes, even his little asides to himself that he would inevitably say out loud, he revealed how simultaneously funny, familiar, and utterly, sympathetic this habit or that affliction was.

He was equally clear-sighted about himself, his foibles and insecurities, which were, of course, his main subject. He thought about them endlessly, talked about them endlessly, and always made them hilariously funny and deeply touching. His humor didn't belittle either himself or others. Instead it revealed how absurd and poignant people really are beneath their outward show. It actually changed people's perception of their own lives. Peter Willumsen has told me how much Alex's monologue deepened and enriched his relationship with his own brother.

Alex's insight and empathy made him a wonderful friend, and the vividness of his character has left an indelible mark on every person who knew him, especially the group of former classmates from St. Bernard's and Trinity whom Winky, I've recently learned, has taken to calling the ragamuffins. (You can see why in the picture she took at his 23rd birthday three weeks ago, in which he sits regally in an armchair, and we look like a bunch of hobos.) Everyone I've talked to remembers him dancing crazily down the halls of Trinity. Everyone remembers him rapping along to Gansta 's Paradise. And we remember how dapper he looked suited up just to take a walk in the halls of Sloan Kettering.

"Sickly superman" was a prescient phrase, since Alex, in the last months of his life, never let his disease take him over. He always kept his courage, his kindness, and his endlessly inventive wit. He stood out vibrantly from the accoutrements of illness around him, always full of humor and always full of life.

The point I really want to make is this: Alex was denied the years in which most people

get to do what conventionally makes life meaningful - have a family, rack up some professional accomplishments. He was denied the time to use the remarkable talents he was only just understanding he had, denied the praise they could have won him, which, with his writerly self involvement, I know he would have loved. Even so, his life was as intensely meaningful as any life can be. His observations, his jokes, even just his watchful, tentative bearing, were unique and utterly unforgettable. His incandescent personality made people love him.

I think my fellow ragamuffin Dan Friedman really got it when he told Winky that, for all the pain and rage we've all felt in last two years, he would not have missed a second of it, would not have traded the profound privilege of knowing Alex and sharing his company for anything in the world. We will never forget Alex and we will never stop loving him.

Alec Magnet

St. B's & Trinity Classmate

Zit Cluster

by *Alex Adam*

“Mirrors suck.”

At least this one did. The reflection I saw in it looked like shit. Uncombed hair, bags under the eyes.

“I hate mirrors.”

There was a cluster of twelve zits on the right side of my forehead that was beginning to spread down my face. I touched one. Ouch. I touched it again. Ouch, it still hurt. Huh. I really detest zits. Not only do they mar my appearance, they also make it difficult to shave. Not that I shave, anyway. You could tell by the black stubble that ran rampant across my face. I chuckled to myself suddenly.

“I have black stubble running rampant across my face.”

“Alex, you’re talking to yourself again, buddy”

Turning around, I saw my co-star Susan staring at me with amusement from the doorway. She was good looking: long black hair, slim body, green eyes. We were lovers in the play we were performing.

“What, you’re not used to it by now?” I laughed, somewhat nervously. I was always a little self-conscious when she was around.

“Come on, buddy, our big scene is next,” she said laughingly

As I walked through the doorway, Susan slapped my butt. Nice of her to do that, I guess. We made our way to the stage. Our play took place in a black box theater. Actually, I’m assuming it’s a black box theater, because the walls, floor, and ceiling are painted black. The theater is one big ol’ cube. It is also always incredibly hot I always sweat buckets whenever I walk into this room, which was not helping my zit-marred appearance. I looked over at Susan, who winked at me. This was our “passionate” scene, where I run over and “aggressively kiss her” (as it says in the script).

Now, I know I was supposed to be ecstatic. I got to kiss Susan, one of the most beautiful girls in my grade. I’m sure that the thought “Gee, what a lucky guy I am,” was dancing about happily somewhere in the vicinity of my subconscious mind. Unfortunately, I was

a bit preoccupied with my conscious mind, which was saying, ‘Oh, for the love of god kill me! I want to die!’ I was supposed to aggressively kiss one of the most beautiful girls in my grade. I do not know how to aggressively kiss. I’m not even sure what an aggressive kiss is.

In James Bond movies, Bond gives love-bites to a lot of women, but I was pretty sure Susan didn’t want me to bite her.

My director broke my train of thought. “Alex, can we start the scene, please?”

Right. The stage was bare for the moment. We hadn’t had time to put together any sort of set. As I walked over to the “door”, I heard giggling. The remainder of the eight person cast was sitting in the audience, ready to be amused. Malicious bastards. I made my entrance, mumbled my way through my lines, and stumbled over to Susan. Putting my arm around her waist, I lunged forward, and got a mouthful of hair.

“Oh shit, I missed!”

Everyone burst out laughing. I smiled sheepishly.

“Nice aim there, Alex.”

“Thanks, Jon.” I gave him the finger.

“Alex,” my director interrupted. “First off,” he broke out into chuckles, “that was terrible. Listen, your character has a lot more confidence than you’re displaying. This guy could walk into a bar, say two words, and have women all over him.”

“I don’t have a lot of experience with seducing women with two word sentences.”

“Look try to be more suggestive.”

“Oh. Okay, I can do that, I guess.”

“Just draw from your own experience.”

The entire cast burst out laughing.

I was laughing too, sort of. Dear god, it was going to be a long rehearsal.

From Richard Adam

Hello. I just wanted to come up here to tell a pretty short story but one that I think really shows the kind of person Alex was both as a brother and as a friend. One night, about four weeks ago, I came home late to find Alex patiently waiting for me, wrapped in his favorite orange blanket. As soon as he saw me, he grinned and murmured something. I couldn't hear him, so I rushed over ready to be helpful; maybe to get a glass of water, another blanket or something. But instead, he just pointed to the chair next to him and beckoned me to lean in closer. Looking me straight in the eyes, Alex whispered, "high school must really be hard right now." At first I almost laughed. Here Alex sat, practically a skeleton after the two years of destructive chemotherapy, surgery, radiation not to mention a bone marrow transplant -and he's talking about how hard my life is. But then he said, "Everything will be okay." And as soon as he said that, I knew that what Alex was really doing was saying goodbye. Even after all the pain he went through, and though his body was so debilitated, Alex had the strength to comfort his little brother. He grabbed my hand and put his head on my shoulder. With tears running down my face, I told him that I loved him and that he was the most important part of my childhood. Alex, grinning, said, "well, of course I was" and with last of his strength gone, he fell asleep. Alex, as you all well know, did not have a long life and did not have enough time to accomplish all the things he wanted. But what is really important, and what defined Alex was his immeasurable understanding and love for his family and friends. And without this I don't think that my family or I would have been able to come to terms with his death. I love my brother, and I know, where ever he is now, he is thrilled to see so many people here, because he loved to be the center of attention, but really, he's just concerned that his family and all of his friends will be okay.

Richard Adam

From Nick Adam

Alex was an intelligent, funny, kind man. He was a fantastic friend and as good an older brother as one could be.

His empathy, and perpetual, sincere politeness affected all who met him. However, Alex never recognized the impact he had on the people and places he crossed, the impact that was so clear to so many others.

This impact first became apparent to me at St. Bernard's, our elementary school, when I came home with my report card on which I was referred to as Alex. Alex, at the time, had graduated two years earlier, and had moved on to Trinity School. The mix up never bothered me, but instead became a point of pride. The kind of thing that I would tell Alex and to which he would inevitably reply: 'Nick, that could not have happened. I am so much better looking'.

In Trinity, his impact continued to be clear. When I was a freshman, a countless number of older students and teachers wanted to talk to me about Alex. Guys would tell me about how hysterical he was, girls about how kind and how much of a hopeless romantic he was, and teachers about his latest written creation. When Alex no longer roamed the halls of Trinity School, but moved on to Princeton, somehow, the student body refused to move on from Alex. When I was senior and Alex was two years out, more than one of the younger students would refer to me as Alex's brother. They remembered him for the pieces he created and read at the semi-annual coffee houses. At the time the reference to Alex's comedic genius seemed par for the course, but it strikes me now that those few minutes with Alex in that dark, hot sweaty coffee house have created for many people vibrant memories that will last for many, many years.

The impact that Alex was having at Princeton University ought to come as no surprise to anyone but Alex. No matter how many times I told him, he never believed how much he touched people at St. B's or Trinity and he certainly had no idea how much he was touching people at Princeton. He often told me that he had 'like 3 friends' at school, but within minutes of my arrival at Princeton, two beautiful girls were leaning out of a 4th floor window screaming Alex's name at me. Never having experienced this flurry of female attention, I let them continue to scream at me for some time before informing them that I, unfortunately, was not

Alex. The girls seemed, quite honestly, heartbroken to have missed their chance to greet Alex on campus.

The moment in which Alex's impact became clearest to me, however, was when a young woman whom I had never seen before ran up to me and bursts into tears. She had just heard that Alex had been diagnosed with Ewings Sarcoma. I had always known that Alex with his humor and wit could make people laugh. But it is comforting for me to know that as Alex's presence brought that laughter, his absence brings tears.

Nick Adam

From Winky and Lazlo Adam

To the outside world, Alex seemed conventional enough. He never lost his St Bernard's habit of wearing khakis and a blue polo shirt. He was quiet- shy even. Every teacher comment Alex ever got said something like: "Gee, I wish Alex would talk more in class". He had sweet manners. Late on a Friday night in December of '04 when Dr. Paul Meyers told him that he had cancer, Alex absorbed the news for a bit and then asked Paul, "So, do you have plans for the weekend?" To the outside world he was a nice-looking, clean-cut, pleasant guy. A seemingly ordinary young man.

But we knew better. At all times, Alex had a three-ring circus dancing in his head: a funny, original chaos of fantasy, social commentary, stream of consciousness zigzags and non sequiturs, all delivered with perfect timing. His specialty was analyzing the social dynamic of his family and friends: a kind of psychoanalytical gossip. He would pace around the apartment, chuckling to himself, lost in his own world. James Joyce could have been describing Alex when he wrote: "He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side glances." Night after night at dinner, Alex would place himself strategically in front of the mirror the better to admire his performance, and off he would go: the Alex show. Alex was an authentic, original observer, and his favorite target was himself. He embraced with verve his own shortcomings: his self doubt, his awkwardness with girls, his Olympic lack of organizational skills, the fact that our cats always chose his back pack on which to pee. He was supremely capable of skewering others' foibles as well- Laszlo was one of his favorite topics and there was much banter and teasing of brothers- but it was all with such affection. We laughed and laughed. There is a reason we have such trust for each other in our family, and it's because from early on Alex set the tone. He was kind in his very bones.

Alex shared his circus with the outside world in two ways: One was his writing- all about himself, naturally. He was funny. He was good. He won some national awards. An admission officer at a college to which he applied wrote him a letter- even before he got in- telling Alex that in 20 years of reading essays, Alex's was the first to make her laugh out loud. Once at Princeton he managed to write his way into advanced creative writing classes, no mean feat for a freshman.

The other way Alex shared his circus with the world was through acting. For a guy who was so shy that he wouldn't talk in class, it was surprising that Alex could get up

on stage and be anybody- the more outrageous, the better. At Trinity, he was George in *Once in a Lifetime*, Ned in *Holiday* and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*. My favorite of his roles was his last. In the Berlind Theater at Princeton, Alex starred as a gay guy who crooned a love song, did a soft shoe, and blew kisses to President Tilghman sitting in the audience. He brought down the house.

When Alex first got sick, he carried on in true Alex fashion. He ignored his pain, he would walk home after a gruesome day of chemo, gleefully horrifying the security guards at the Met by revealing the hydration system in his back pack, he collected anecdotes for his book on cancer (the best, ever!) on how it felt to be on the pediatric floor talking to hot young nurses about his urine.

But, cruelly, Alex never got a chance to write his book. In September of '05, just weeks after Alex had returned to Princeton for his sophomore year, his cancer came back. Alex underwent grueling months of chemo, radiation and finally, a tough bone marrow transplant. He knew his body well, and Alex knew that he was dying long before we were able to accept it. By August 2006 as the endless chemo was taking its toll, and his pain was increasing, Alex stopped talking. He would not join us at the dinner table. We thought we had already lost him. But we were wrong. As Alex walked in the valley of the shadow of death during the last few months of his life, he was devoting all his energy, his deep understanding, his considerable intellect in preparing to die. By early December, when we were ready to face the reality of his death, Alex had already made his peace with it. This was his last great gift to us, because it allowed us to tell him everything we had in our hearts and to hear everything he had in his. And we had our Alex back again. Weak though he was, we had a lot of fun. We had dinner. We played bocce. We threw parties. He was funny. When a friend asked him if he had any regrets he said: "Yeah. I always wanted children. And I wanted to get my ear pierced!" One night we talked about how he would like to be remembered. "I want," he said, "to have a prize at Princeton in my name for the most creative freshman... with the worst GPA."

Cancer is a cruel thief. It robbed Alex of his future and it robbed us of him. But we have him still in the way our family can still laugh, even as we are bowed with grief.

In his last days, as the cancer spread and Alex was increasingly weak and in pain, I cried on his shoulder. "This is not natural," I said, "It is not right for a father to see his son die. I wish, I so wish that I could die instead of you." Alex looked at me and said, "Dad, I wish you could die instead of me, too!"

I don't want people to misunderstand his humor. Good humor is complex, but it is dark, too. Alex was a complicated man with many contradictions. He was sensitive and brave. He was shy and bold. He was self-deprecating, yet hugely ambitious. He was kind, but he had a dark side, too. He felt always like an outsider looking in. Alex was our Hamlet. He was my Prince. "Now cracks a Noble heart. Good night, sweet prince. And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

They say it takes a village to raise a child. It turns out that it takes a village to bury one as well. We have been blessed to have the support and love of our extraordinary family and friends, and the angels at Memorial Sloan Kettering who cared for him so well. Our journey with Alex was a long, frightening and painful one, and we could never have done it alone.

Winky Adam

Lazlo Adam

Homily Preached At Alex Adams Memorial Service - The Rev. Philippa A. Turner

Alex, all who knew him - as we heard in all the moving eloquent remembrances - were never at a loss to describe him with words of wit, wonder, laughter, love, care, compassion – Words we know he could probably have molded transformed into something even more moving funny and striking.

Alex – it is too too soon to be standing here today to celebrate his life, but Celebrate it we do, no matter how brief the journey – for it was full, rich and in it he did not waste a minute truly

Living

Giving

Sharing.

I'm sorry I didn't know him longer. A few intense weeks. But I saw in him – his searching eyes, his kind manner even in the midst of pain – such courage,

Such Dignity

Such Honour

Such Love

Yes, even in those difficult moments, humour

Such Care

In this liturgy today we Celebrate in Word in Song in Prayer we remember , we give back Alex, yet all in the context of eternal life.

How can we bear to let go , and yet, as the beautiful prayer puts it – in giving back we do not lose him for the expanse of Gods heart is so vast that it contains us all, its's just our understanding of time is different. Alex is now embraced in eternity. In my Father's house, it says, there are many rooms, I go to prepare a place for thee.

He, Alex, has entered far too soon, but he is not alone. He has gone before, defying death, and Alex, our faith proclaims and hope trusts, is embraced in that Love where there is No more pain, No more weeping – where everything has been made New.

And that Great company of those who have gone on before abide and live in Love so there is Nothing lonely about it at all.

Alex said to me a few weeks ago that he hoped that a part of him would remain behind. Well we all Know that that part is his Love and our love which bind us to him and him to us, forever. Time and Space and Death can not take that away.

The Psalmist declares that he lifts up his eyes to the hills from whence comes his help.

Alex loves the mountains – one of his most joyful moments perhaps – accomplishment – victory – awe was reaching the peak of a mountain and appreciating this vast and beautiful and magnificent creation of which we are all a part.

His fight against cancer is one in which we all stand in awe at his Tenacity *and* Giving back, right to the end.

And yet – a new beginning, in which, in a way we will learn with trepidatic and sorrow, yet also with faith and hope – his new life, his eternal love will live in us – Always.

May we go forth from this place Strengthened – Comforted by this Hope, by his memory, his words ringing in our ears and buoyed up by the angelic voices heard here today carrying him to the heart of God.

Amen

IN MEMORIAM

Adam '07 dies of cancer

Student who loved theater and creative writing passes away in New York

By Angela Cai and Nathan Edgerton Princetonian Staff Writers

Alexander Adam '07, an active member of the Princeton theater community and an aspiring writer, died of Ewing's sarcoma January 25 at his family's home in New York City. He was 23. A 2002 graduate of the Trinity School in New York, Adam lived on the Upper West Side of Manhattan with his parents, Laszlo '73 and Winky, and his two brothers, Nick '08 and Dash, a high school junior. On the afternoon of February 2, hundreds of family members and friends gathered at the Church of Heavenly Rest on Fifth Avenue and 90th Street in New York to mourn Adam's passing. They remembered his disarming and self deprecating humor, generosity and genuineness.

In his eulogy for his older brother, Nick Adam said that when he was a freshman in high school, "a countless number of older students and teachers wanted to talk to me about Alex." "Guys would tell me about how hysterical he was, girls about how kind and how much of a hopeless romantic he was and teachers about his latest written creation," he said.

Not long before he died, Adam joked with his mother that a prize should be created in his memory for "the most creative freshman with the worst GPA," she said in an interview.

"Alex's writings demonstrated that one can be witty and funny without ever being caustic or cruel," said Adam's grandfather, Richard Furland.

Alec Magnet, Adam's friend from Trinity, recalled how even the staff at Sloan-Kettering Memorial Hospital grew attached to him. "Alex was so kind and easy to talk to and would ask the nurses and doctors [about themselves]," he said. "He would give advice to a doctor who was having girl trouble." Adam played with children in the pediatric ward who were undergoing treatment. "They all just flocked to him like a mother hen," Magnet said. "He was there getting his chemo and really thinking about himself dying, and he was better than a psychiatrist with the kids."

Cliff White, another Trinity classmate, said Adam was so selfless that it was hard to get him to talk about himself during a conversation. “He was always wondering about other people,” White said. “He’d never get into his own problems, even in his final days.”

Friends and family said they were frustrated that Adam was too modest to realize how admired and loved he was. “He was so handsome and appealing and charming, and he never understood that about himself,” said his mother.

Rodney Deavault ‘07, who co-starred as Adam’s lover in “Playing in the Dark” at the Berlind Theater, said that after the show was over, Adam said, “Rodney, it’s sad that this year, I got the most action from you. I’m never gonna get any girls after this show.” “But actually,” Deavault added, “half the girls were in love with him after the show.”

Magnet said that though Adam was shy, “he was so nice and so obviously contained such multitudes of insight that everyone was actually fascinated with him. He would never believe any of us when we told him that half the girls at [Trinity] were throwing themselves at him.”

‘Refreshing personality’

After graduating from high school, with Princeton acceptance letter in hand, Adam took a year off to travel and work. He hiked in Alaska, traveled to China and worked for Hart-Sharp Entertainment in New York City. In April of 2003, he and friend Peter Grey began to hike the Appalachian Trail, though injuries soon cut the trip short.

When he arrived on campus that fall, Adam once again took up his favorite extracurricular activities: acting and writing. He participated in three plays during his freshman year and got involved in the creative writing program.

“He threw himself into the theater, and he was shy so it was very hard for him,” his mother said. “But he ended up going on a lot of auditions and got into a lot of productions.”

Mike Solis ‘07, one of Adam’s roommates, said he was uniquely attentive to others. “[He was a] truly refreshing personality at a place where people often tend to get caught up in little things very easily,” he said.

In an e-mail, Solis recalled hiking in California with Adam for their freshman seminar, Active Geological Processes. Upon discovering a glacial lake, “Alex jumped into it without even thinking twice. “I just thought to myself, ‘Who is this person!’ “ Solis said. “It was so funny to see someone do that.”

In the spring of his freshman year, Adam took a creative writing class with Professor Joyce Carol Oates, in which Solis was also a student. “In that class he was really in his element,” Solis said. “He had a passion for writing and for providing others with helpful feedback with their work.”

Former visiting professor Alan Hollinghurst, who taught Adam in the fall of his sophomore year, said in an e-mail, “his pieces made me laugh out loud. In manner he was charming, courteous, almost diffident; but the stories he wrote, made up mainly of dialogue, were funny and scabrous.”

Nick Adam, who began his freshman year at the University when his brother was a sophomore, recalled how tight-knit he and his brothers were as siblings growing up. “When we were kids, Alex was kind of the leader of the group,” he said, referring to the three Adam brothers. “He kind of included us, but he would keep us entertained, invent games for me and my little brother.”

Though the two spent less time together in high school, Nick Adam said they grew close once again when they were both at the University. They saw each other every day, often meeting for coffee in Frist Campus Center.

“In Princeton, he was only a year above me,” he said, “so this relationship developed that was more like what we had when we were kids.”

Adam performed with Theatre Intime, the Princeton Shakespeare Company and the Program in Theatre and Dance during his three semesters on campus.

In addition to “Playing in the Dark,” the student production that played at the Berlind Theatre, in which he starred as a gay white Princeton student, he also participated in the Theatre Intime Freshman One Acts. The next fall, he played the Neil Simon play “Rumors.”

Amy Widdowson '06, a friend of Adam's who was in “Rumors” in the fall of 2004, described Adam as a solid talent. “He was the only sophomore who had a major role, but he held his own with all the juniors and seniors,” she said. “He was so consistent and nailed it from the first reading.” His cheerful attitude and humorous wit made him a favorite among the cast. “In any situation, he always had something really witty that just made sense, and everyone would say, ‘I wish I had said that,’” Widdowson said.

A Long Battle

Adam spent the summer after his freshman year in China with Princeton in Beijing,

when he began to complain of shoulder pains. By December 2004, the pain increased so much that his doctors insisted on an MRI. Though they initially suspected that he had a torn rotator cuff, doctors found a large tumor in his shoulder blade. He was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare cancer that is usually found in or near bone. He began chemotherapy at Sloan-Kettering, which proved effective, though he wasn't able to return to campus for final exams in January or for the spring semester. By May 2005, the tumor had shrunk from the size of a grapefruit to virtually nothing. Optimistic, doctors performed surgery to remove his shoulder blade and replace it with one made of titanium. Though saddened that this would hinder his acting career, he spent the summer recuperating and returned to Princeton in the fall as a member of the Class of 2008.

Widdowson remembered seeing him at Tower Club one night early in the 2005 academic year. "He was all smiles," she said. "He was so strong and so looking forward to coming back, and [he was] so excited to be at this party with everyone." He was interested in writing a book about his experiences, which he joked would be the "best ever book on cancer," his mother said. "He collected anecdotes on how it felt to be on the pediatric floor talking to hot young nurses about - his urine."

When Adam returned to campus in the fall of 2005, he did not immediately immerse himself in theater productions. "He was trying not to do too much too fast," said Julia Cain '07 said, who acted with him in "Playing in the Dark."

Within three weeks of his return, though, he began noticing pain in the lower part of his spine. He returned to the hospital, and doctors found that the cancer had returned. The recurrence suggested that the cancer would spread even further.

His doctors estimated that Adam had six to 12 months to live but then proposed the possibility of a bone marrow transplant. Neither of his brothers were a match, but in February 2006, the hospital found one in the National Bone Marrow Bank from a donor in Minneapolis.

"He was rebounding very well, doing great until July 2006," his father said. A biopsy, however, revealed that the Ewing's sarcoma cells had returned, despite the transplant. Though he continued chemotherapy, it was apparent that the treatment would only temporarily prolong his life.

A few months before Adam's death, Cain visited New York and went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art with him.

“He was definitely sicker than I’ve seen him before,” she said. “But he still had this amazing spirit about it. He said he was bored, so he wanted me to suggest books for him to read.”

On December 7, Adam decided to stop the treatment. “It was a great, brave, mature thing,” his mother said. “We spent the next six weeks basically saying goodbye to him.”

Among their many regrets, friends lamented the lost contributions Adam could have made to the fields he loved. “One of the things that [is] so enraging about his death is that he had such extraordinary talent as a writer and as an actor,” Magnet said. “But it’s just impossible to think about all the things he’s missed, things he could’ve done and the life he could’ve lived.”

“Every time someone dies, you always say, ‘Why did it have to happen to this person?’” Widdowson said. “But really, this is one of the things that makes you sit back and say the world is just not fair. He never had anything bad to say about anybody. He was just so wonderful.”

Caption: Friends described Alexander Adam ‘07 as a witty and talented individual who put others first. An aspiring actor and creative writer, Adam had planned to write a book about his struggle with cancer.



A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

FOR THE LIFE OF

ALEXANDER JAY ADAM '07

(1984-2007)



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CHAPEL

Monday, February 19, 2007

4:30 P.M.

Please stand for those parts of the service marked with an asterisk (*).

Organ Prelude Antiphon Calvin Hampton

Opening Sentences

*Hymn O God Our Help in Ages Past *St. Anne*
(the hymn may be found on the insert)

Invocation

Reading John 14:1-6

*Responsive Reading Psalm 23

Leader The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

*People The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures,
And leads me beside still waters.*

Leader God revives my soul,
And guides me along right pathways for the sake of God's name.

*People Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil;*

Leader For you are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

People You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;

Leader You have anointed my head with oil,
And my cup is running over.

*People Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Reading "Crushed" by Alexander Adam Jonathan Miller '07

Musical Offering Sing Me to Heaven Daniel Gawthrop
(b. 1949)

In my heart's sequestered chambers lie truths
stripped of poets' gloss. Words alone are vain and vacant,
and my heart is mute. In response to aching silence, memory
summons half-heard voices, and my soul finds primal eloquence,
and wraps me in song.

If you would comfort me, sing me a lullaby. .
If you would win my heart, sing me a love song.
If you would mourn me and bring me to God,
sing me a requiem, sing me to Heaven.

Touch in me all love and passion, pain and pleasure.
Touch in me grief and comfort; love and passion, pain and
pleasure. Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem
Love me, comfort me, bring me to God:
Sing me a love song, sing me to Heaven.

- Jane Griner

The Princeton University Tigertones

Remembrance	“Creation Stories”	Julia Cain '07
Remembrance		Raleigh Martin '08
Musical Offering	Sarabande from <i>Suite No. 3</i> for cello Nikki Federman '07	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Remembrance		Jennifer Schanbacher '04
Remembrance		Nicholas Adam '08
Remembrance	Read by Maria DiBattista, Master, Rockefeller College	Professor Joyce Carol Oates
Anthem	And I Saw a New Heaven	Edgar L. Bainton (1880-1956)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;
and there was no more sea.
And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down
from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying,

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with you, and God will dwell
with you and you shall be God’s people, and Adonai shall be with you
and be your God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes:
And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying,
neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are
passed away.”

Revelations XXI, vv.1-4

*Litany of Hope

In the midst of sadness, let us affirm our hope.

We are gathered as a community to honor a son, a brother, a student, a classmate, and a friend.

Leader We remember a son who showed care for others.

People *We affirm our hope in the power of kindness.*

Leader We remember a brother who sought knowledge with alacrity.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 90:1-2, 4-5

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,

Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
Suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream,
soon bears us all away;
We fly for - got - ten, as a dream
fades at the o - pening day.

6 O God, our help in a - ges past,
our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while trou - bles last,
and our e - ter - nal home!

Watts, minister of a Congregational church in London, wrote theological and philosophical works and hundreds of "hymns of human composure" (everyday language). He augmented the congregational singing of psalms with a new style of hymnody.

Tune: ST. ANNE C.M.
William Croft, 1708

Crushed

by Alex Adam

The rehearsal I had finished a few hours ago kept playing itself over and over again in my head. I had been cast in the role of a young man who spends the show trying to seduce other young men. With monologues. He seduces them with monologues. Unfortunately, the director Paul hadn't been particularly impressed with my gay monologue seduction attempts.

After one such effort, he looked at me sadly. "Sam." He said.

"Paul." I replied.

"We need to get some of these emotions down."

"Okay."

He sighed. "You need to loosen up, man. Have some fun with it; savor it. And stop worrying about the whole gay thing. Women love guys who play gay men."

The stage manager's head popped up at that. "What?" she asked.

"Shut up Talia," Paul continued, "No, I'm serious. This campus is full of fag hags."

"Oh." I wasn't entirely sure how to respond to that. "But isn't that bad for straight guys?"

Paul ignored me. "Your character is really uncomfortable and nervous in this scene. I need you to internalize that. Actually no, no, you know what? This is great! We'll get to use some Brechstine (Bertolt Brecht)."

Brechstine (Bertolt Brecht)? I said, "You know, I think I already have a pretty good idea of what it feels to be nervous and uncomfortable."

"Put your script down."

"Oh shit."

"We're going to improvise your monologue."

"We're going to improvise my monologue?"

"Yes."

I paused. "Couldn't I just try reading it again?"

“No, we’re using Brechstine.”

“Who the fuck is Brechstine?”

“Just put your script down kid.”

“I really suck at improv games.”

“I don’t care. Don’t worry about it. Just don’t think and say the first thing that pops into your mind, alright?” He continued “Have you ever read a personal add?”

Talia snorted from her corner.

Paul pointed at her. “Shut up Talia This is Brechstine.”

“Would you please stop saying Brechstine?” I asked him.

“Stop interrupting. Look, it’s not a difficult question. Have you ever read a personal ad?”

“Yes. No. Maybe.” Wow, I already felt uncomfortable. Great. “Why do you ask?”

“Look, this speech just has an element of ‘personal ad’ to it. Alright, fuck it.” He shook his hands at me. “We’ll try something else.”

“Will it still be Brechstine?”

“Shut up. I’m trying to make you a better actor.”

“Thank you.”

“Shut the fuck up!” Paul collected himself and asked me, “Look, did you go to your senior prom?”

“Oh shit.”

“So you went?”

“Yes.”

“Did you take someone you cared about?”

“Do we have to play this game?”

“Yes!”

“Fine! No I did not.”

“Alright, alright, that’s cool.”

Fuck you man. I didn’t say it out loud, but what the hell?

Paul continued, “Was there someone you wanted to take but didn’t?”

“Yes.”

“What did she look like?”

For reasons I don’t really understand, in my haste to not describe the girl I hadn’t taken to my high school prom, I panicked and began describing the first girl I could think of. Who happened to be the girl I’d recently fallen in love with who lives across the hall from me in my dorm. I hate improv games.

“Um.” I found myself saying, “Cute. Asian. Petite. Hair, teeth, eyes... um.”

Halfway through listing some of the body parts that could be found on her head, I realized that Talia the stage manager, who was sitting all of fifteen feet away from me, was actually a good friend of this girl. God, I hate improv games. And believe it or not, it was then that words really began to fail me. “She... likes to cook.” Damn it.

“Is that it?”

“Yes. You know what, how about I try those monologues again? I’m actually feeling sexed up and loose. Hoo-Ha! I’m gonna seduce me some boys!”

“What was her name?”

I told myself, “Just don’t say Susan Bren.” I looked at Paul and said, “Not Susan Bren.” Fuck. I hate improv games. My brain never cooperates, that’s why I don’t do improv. It’s... fuck.

“Ok Sam,” Paul was getting serious, “for this speech, I want you to believe that Susan Bren has just asked, ‘Sam, why should I go out with you? What do you have to offer me?’ How would you respond?”

I stared at him “Are you serious?”

“Yes! Do it man! Susan Bren; ‘Sam, what do you want from me?’ What do you say?”

“She wants to know what I want from her?”

“You’re gonna blow it, Dude- Start talking!”

“Uh. I want someone... fun loving?”

“Fun loving? Okay, good good, that’s good. What else?”

“I want someone... who likes to cook?” God I’m an idiot

“Okay, she likes cooking, you told me she likes cooking, that’s good. What else do you want from Susan Bren?”

“Could you please stop using her name?” My left eye had begun to twitch every time he did. I was praying that Talia was just completely zonked out, and wasn’t listening to a fucking thing either Paul or I was saying. I looked over at her. She seemed to be engaged with her laptop. Too engaged

“What?” Paul was confused. “No, no, look, it doesn’t matter. Just think of more things to say.”

“I have to think of more?”

“You’ve thought of two. Two things. You can think of some more- come on!”

“Someone who...”

“Will stop saying ‘someone who?’ This is monologue, not a grocery list. Just relax.”

“I’m relaxed! I’m perfectly fucking relaxed! I am so relaxed... actually, you know what?” I continued, “I really feel I’ve got this whole ‘being uncomfortable’ thing down. How about we move on?”

“In moment man! Just relax, imagine Susan ...”

“Would you stop using her fucking name?! Jesus Christ!”

“Whoa- Calm down.”

“I’m calm! I’m calm! I’m perfectly fucking calm ...you, you know what? I... I think have internalized these emotions. I...yes, I really have. Brechstine would be proud. I’m feeling good. Let’s line up the man meat I am ready to start the gay seduction FUCK!”

“Are you alright?” Paul suddenly seemed a little concerned.

“I’m fine. I’m fine.” Talia’s a whore. “I’m fine. Um, what were we working on again?”

God I hate improv games.

From Julia Harman Cain

Creation Stories
For Alex Adam

I.

In ancient China,
storytellers tapped their teeth,
declared that Pangu,
god and giant,
awoke inside an egg.

His horns curled in -
five centuries exhausted,
coiling in the shell.
Then one brown dawn
he lumbered free
to split the earth and sky.

II.

In the beginning, we chatted by a window. Plants snoozed beside us, over-warm in plaster pots,
quivering awake as snow burst through the screen.

Our talk bent backward. Last summer, you scattered prints across China, the Appalachian Trail;
you broke the bones in your foot and commanded them to hold out, to rattle away, like pennies and
dimes inside your boots.

We snapped stems off the plants; we debated your sanity.

By September, your stride returned. The cane, languishing over one shoulder and skittering along
the barks of trees - that was mostly for effect.

III

The Taoists plucked them out:
five Great Mountains.

From the rocks and trees,
they rose above the crooked roofs.

They bested flagstone walls,
statues, cross-legged and dreaming.

Just those five, you said,
how did they get so lucky?

IV.

Folded behind the sightline, you twisted your cuffs; half-listening for your cue, half-cursing all shirtsleeves in the Western Hemisphere for tricks played on your thumbs.

Then you mapped them out: your gazes for the night. This monologue for your History professor, an owl behind square glasses - this one-liner for a sophomore girl, tucked into her denim jacket, curled up in the fourth row, center.

When you stepped out, cherry light triangulated from bowtie to suede Oxford; cane and top hat spun over your wrists tango dancers, breathless and full-bodied.

V.

In the mountains of China,
crawlspaces, armholes of the Hua Shan,
ancient miners dug their nails
deep in the dirt and cracking stones.

Light from iron lanterns
cascaded around stalactites,
painting two-horned shadows on the wall,
casting a gazelle, a skinny hawk.

Diamonds, they said,
those are bones of Pangu,
slivers from his hand, spine notches,
an ankle that burrowed into the Pearl River shallows
as Pangu pressed the sky
up and away from the ground.

VI.

In such stories, men created their creator.

Their words, ink of soot and water, bold strokes on rice paper, have something in common with your winks and the turn of your mouth - with your penchant for shaping, for conjuring up an afternoon or a wide-brimmed hat, the neck of Madame X in the Museum.

Your fingers pluck them out: full lifetimes on the subway, in the Park, on benches under the flickering moons of streetlamps; you dream out lives for men selling overcoats and mushrooms, the girl in the pale-striped scarf who tossed her hair into your neck.

You might like Pangu. Head in the clouds, he created earth: cities and subway lines, cherry light, boots and belts for mountain trails.

VII.

Or the two, the four,
the whole of us,
we create one another.

Today in the museum,
we circle Rothko,
Pollock and Matisse,
wait twenty-three minutes
for ice from the café.

You fill them to spilling:
our cups, the conversation.
Gossip from the snow,
stone giants, purple rivers
scamper across the tablecloth.
Then your mouth snaps up,
caught by the collar
on the edge of a riddle -
this one private,
between you and the city.

— Julia Harman Cain

From Joyce Carol Oates

In our fiction workshop of unusually talented young writers, which included Eleanor Barlthom and Jacob Savage, Alexander Adam was outstanding. His workshop presence was vibrant, engaged, unfailingly intelligent and insightful. His writing was sharp-edged, unexpectedly corrosive, and very funny.

Alex seemed incapable of “doing” an assignment in a conventional way. His workshop portfolio was titled “This is Not About Me”—a droll commentary, since the stories did seem to be about Alex, or a young male figure who very much resembled him. The titles of his short stories were terse and unsentimental: “Crushed” — “Squeezed” — “Void” — “zig” — “sweat.” Alex’s work was naturally dramatic; his command of dialogue was impressive. I remember telling him, during the workshop, as I don’t believe that I have ever told any other student in such circumstances, before or since, that he could have a career as a playwright or a writer of first-rate television scripts like those produced on HBO. This seemed to me at the time absolutely possible, perhaps probable.

Though Alex brought the gift of laughter to our workshop, and seemed to exude geniality, his personality was complex, and it is perhaps significant that the cover image for his portfolio was a reproduction of Edvard Munch’s “The Scream.” This image has become unnervingly familiar, almost iconic / stereotypical in our culture, but it is in fact a startlingly original and painterly image, meant to suggest the haunting quality of isolated, inner anguish and yet its transformation through the most luminous art.

It is astonishing to me to realize that Alex is no longer among us, since he looms so distinctly in my memory.

Sincerely, Joyce Carol Oates

For All the Saints

Heb. 12:1

William W. How, 1864; alt.

1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who to the
 2 You were their rock, their refuge, and their might: you, Christ, the
 3 Still may your people, faithful, true, and bold, live as the
 4 Ringed by this cloud of witnesses divine, we feebly
 5 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the

world their steadfast faith confessed, your name, O Je - sus,
 hope that put their fears to flight; 'mid gloom and doubt, you
 saints who nobly fought of old, and share with them a
 struggle, they in glory shine; yet in your love our
 ear the distant triumph song, then hearts are brave a -

be for - ev - er blessed.
 were their one true light.
 glorious crown of gold. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 faith - ful lives en - twine.
 gain, and faith grows strong.

This traditional All Saints Day hymn originally consisted of eleven stanzas written for the Sarum Hymnal (1869) and set to a tune by that name, Sarum. It has grown in popularity since it was later paired with the enduring Sine Nomine in The English Hymnal (1906).

Tune: SINE NOMINE 10.10.10.4.
 Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Music Copyright ©, Oxford University Press. From *The English Hymnal 1906*.

from Nikki Fedennan

I first met Alex the beginning of our freshman year. He was a hard person to miss after injuring his leg traveling through China, Alex spent the first few weeks of school hobbling around campus with a cane. He used to joke that it made him look distinguished... or like an old man.

We both had the same seriously misguided notion that taking 9am language classes five days a week was a good idea. We would sit together at breakfast, him scribbling down Chinese characters on brown paper napkins, me frantically flipping my index cards, both of us vainly attempting to memorize massive amounts of vocabulary before class. For the first few minutes of our breakfasts, we would vent about class, work, lack of sleep, etc. We would complain about everything under the sun. But the one thing Alex never complained about was the cancer. He had such an incredible spirit and sense of humor during all of the hardship he went through. For a short time, we all thought Alex was out of the woods for good. He came back to school ready for action: his hair had grown back, he had, and I quote, a “sexy scar” and a new titanium shoulder blade, which, according to Alex, was a girl magnet because “chicks dig titanium.” After just two weeks back at school, Alex started feeling pain in his lower back. The cancer had returned.

Alex sent his friends a characteristically Alex e-mail, explaining that he had relapsed and was expecting all of us to shower him with love, gifts, and candy. I read that e-mail and burst out into tears of sadness and anger. I could not understand, and still cannot understand, how something so horrible could happen to such a wonderful person. I told Alex that love, gifts, and candy were waiting for him in my room and asked if he wanted to meet up for coffee. He came to my room that day and enveloped me in a bone-crushing hug. I told him that it was okay if he wanted to cry or say that life wasn't fair, that he hated life. He pulled back from the hug, looked me in the eye, and said, “No, I pretty much love life right now. I want to hang on to it for as long as I can.”

Over the course of the next few months, I visited Alex in the city after my viola lessons. He would always steer the conversation away from himself, and ask, “but really, how are you, are you in high spirits?” After time spent with him, I was always in high spirits. One of my favorite Alex stories took place one day while we were walking down 9th Avenue. Seeing that I was loaded down with my viola case and a girly tote bag decorated with little butterflies, Alex asked if he could carry the bag, knowing full well I never let

anyone carry my case. “Seriously?” I asked, “You want to carry the girly butterfly bag?? Isn’t that a threat to your manhood or something?” Alex responded, “Actually, no. It makes me look like more of a man. Say we were walking down the street, and somebody saw you carrying all this stuff and me carrying nothing. The guy would look at me and think, “schmuck.” But if I carry your bag, it’s obvious that I’m carrying it for a beautiful girl, so it makes me look great!”

Alex’s sense of humor was contagious. Never dwelling on the negative, Alex always managed to make people laugh during times of greatest sorrow. I can’t begin to make sense of Alex’s death. I refuse to accept that he is truly gone. His passing is a senseless tragedy. But we can all honor Alex’s memory by living our lives in the way he lived his—by placing concern for others over ourselves and by keeping a sense of humor in the face of adversity. In this way, Alex will never fully leave us.

Viola Lady

IN MEMORIAM Classmates

remember Adam '07

By Nathan Edgerton
Princetonian Staff Writer



As the setting sun filtered through the stained-glass windows of the University Chapel yesterday, students, faculty and family members gathered to share stories and honor the memory of Alexander Adam '07. He died at his home Jan. 25 at age 23.

Adam attended the University for his freshman year and most of his sophomore fall before withdrawing to undergo treatment for Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

Following an opening hymn and readings from the Bible, Adam's friend Jonathan Miller '07 acted out the narrative of "Crushed," a story Adam wrote about the awkwardness of seducing fellow actors on stage.

"He had a talent for creating the internal monologue of everyone he met," Julia Cain '07 said in an e-mail. "He was a great storyteller." Cain acted with Adam three years ago in "Playing in the Dark," a senior thesis production in which Adam played a white undergraduate confronting the challenges of a gay interracial relationship.

Raleigh Martin '08, one of Adam's freshman year hallmates, remembered Adam's composure. He recalled their trip to California for a geology seminar. The two got lost on a hike and ended up at the rim of a crater with a steep drop on each side. Though Martin said he had an acute fear of heights, Adam remained calm.

"I expected him to get impatient as I crawled along, petrified to stand up on two feet and risk falling," he said. "However, Alex was extremely patient and helpful."

He also spoke of Adam's genuine interest in others, a trait of his that many of his friends emphasized during the memorial. "He always listened intently and took a genuine interest in what I had to say," Martin said.

Jennifer Schanbacher '04 remembered Adam's enthusiasm for his role in her senior thesis production.

“It was a big role that few would see him play, but I sometimes thought he took an even greater interest in my work than I did,” she said.

Nick Adam '08 said his brother Alex affected the lives of those he met, though he never realized it.

“He often told me that he had ‘like three friends’ at school,” Nick Adam said, “but within minutes of my arrival at Princeton, two beautiful girls were leaning out of a fourth floor window screaming Alex’s name at me.”

That influence became even more apparent as word spread of Adam’s illness.

“The moment in which Alex’s impact became clearest to me, however, was when a young woman whom I had never seen before ran up to me and burst into tears,” he said. “She had just heard that Alex had been diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma.”

Teng Kuan Ng '05, who was Adam’s residential adviser during his summer at Princeton-in Beijing, said that though he didn’t know Adam well, he remembered that Adam “had very sensitive and gentle eyes.”

Rockefeller College Master Maria DiBattista read a statement about Adam from Joyce Carol Oates, his creative writing professor during the spring of his freshman year.

She praised his work, calling it “sharp-edged, unexpectedly corrosive and very funny.” Though the workshop included many talented writers, she recalled that his work stood out.

“I remember telling him during the workshop, as I don’t believe that I have ever told any other student in such circumstances, before or since, that he could have a career as a playwright or a writer of first-rate television scripts,” Oates said.

Near the close of the service, Associate Dean of Religious Life Paul Raushenbush gave the Litany of Hope prayer. He read, “Forgetting nothing, let us move forward in hope.”

Nikki Fedennan '07 - who ate breakfast with Adam many mornings before he went to 9 a.m. introductory Chinese during their freshman year - played a J.S. Bach suite on the cello.

Federman emphasized that the piece was written in C Major, rather than a somber Minor chord.

“He hated people fussing over him, so I wanted to play a hopeful piece,” she said.

Despite Adam’s passing, those who knew him have remarked of the permanence of their memories of him.

“It is astonishing to me to realize that Alex is no longer among us, since he looms so distinctly in my memory,” Oates wrote.

A Family Thanks

We want to thank the entire Princeton University Administration and Rev. Rausherbush and members of the Chapel for all of their wonderful work in arranging this beautiful service to celebrate Alex's life. In particular, we would like to thank Dean Avens, Dean Williams and President Tilghman for their kindness over these very difficult two years. All Alex wanted was to return to Princeton and all they wanted was to get him back! They went to extraordinary lengths and swept away all obstacles to make that happen. In so doing they gave Alex enormous comfort and confirmed our conviction that Princeton is an institution extraordinary not only for its academics, but also its warm heart.



I want to thank his wonderful teachers and I want to thank you, his classmates for supporting Alex during his life and remembering him today. As you return to Princeton, 'the best place in the world', in the years and decades ahead, we hope you will remember Alex as always here, a good memory, forever young, funny, charming, intelligent and unique.

From John Nichols

Alex Memorial Service -

In these wrenching, painful days after Alex's death, after he suffered so much for so long, I have been amazed how his family and friends, all of us, when we've talked about him, have constantly returned to certain themes: Alex's humor, his gentleness, his intelligence, his charm, his modesty. And we have marveled at how rare it is for anyone to combine so many wonderful traits, and how lucky we've been to know him. For one thing, he sure kept us on our toes. Anyone who met Alex knows that his humor was quick, sharp, and witty. He'd toss witticisms into conversations like firecrackers, and his mind was always racing along. And yet he was the most self-deprecating wit ever. He poked fun far more often at his own limitations than those of others, and it's no wonder that people enjoyed his company so thoroughly: he was warmhearted, steady, solid, and oh so funny. In Alex's freshman year at Princeton, he and I were walking across the campus on a perfect fall afternoon, and we ran into a professor friend of mine. I introduced Alex to him, they talked for a few minutes, and the next day, that friend called me to say that Alex was "the most instantly likable person" he had ever met. That's the effect he had on everyone. He was not a backslapper or a jock or a politician, those professional extroverts who set out to win friends and influence people. Instead, he was just himself. There was no side to him. He was the same honest, forthright, funny, modest person in every situation, with every group.

How Alex could keep that sense of humor during the last two years I just don't know. He had his ups and downs, but as the weeks of chemo stretched on, and as his hopes were alternately raised and frustrated, time after time, he remained funny and courageous and humane. When we visited him, he continued to be interested in what we were doing. He wanted advice on books to read and movies to watch. He wanted to know the news, even the gossip. He struggled, in the face of horrendous odds, to maintain his compassion and his composure-and he succeeded. Part of that success must be due to the family he was lucky to be born into. I must pay tribute to the love and devoted care of Laszlo, Winky, Nick, and Dash. Every single day for the last two years, in the hospital and at home, they surrounded Alex with their never-ending love. Their care for Alex was constant, and their energy never flagged. They showed the most inspiring affection and

support that I believe I have ever seen. When he died, Alex was in Winky's arms, with the others surrounding him in a big group hug, the same hug they had given him every day for the last two years. And we now promise to surround them with the same sort of hug in the days and years ahead.

When cancer continued to work its evil, and when things looked increasingly bleak, Alex showed us something profound: though his disease finally, cruelly conquered his body, it could not conquer his spirit. Even in his last days, he was the same Alex. I remember visiting him near the end: he was sitting by a roaring fire, wrapped in two blankets, and he was so weak that he could join the conversation only rarely, and then only in a whisper. But four separate times he let fly witty retorts-and he did this with perfect timing and that wry smile of his. The memories we all have are so immediate and so powerful that I'm certain we will always feel his presence. His tragically early death robs us of his physical presence but it can't take away the essence of the young man we adored. Alex's immense love for us, and our immense love for him, will never end.

John Nichols

Trinity School

Teacher Friend

From Bill Williams

For Alex

Some of you may know, and others of you will be saddened to learn of the death of Alex Adam, Trinity class of 2002. He had just turned 23.

Alex succumbed Thursday to bone cancer, after a prolonged and noble struggle.

Alex was a gentle soul, a gentle young man, a true gentleman.

A year ago he sat where you are now seated, enjoying the work of Trinity actors. In prior years he graced our stage. He was one of us.

Alex was a talented, generous actor. Many of his happiest and finest hours were spent in this theater.

Tonight we dim the lights of our stage for a quiet moment in his honor and his memory. Let us remember him by reflecting him in our own lives, and in so reflecting illumine all creation in a brighter image.

It will in no way diminish Alex to follow up silence in his memory with high comedy. I can assure you, my friend, our friend, would have it no other way indeed, he would have it just so.

Good night sweet princeand flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

Dim the lights.

Bill Williams Trinity School - Theatre Director

