

[Letter by Theo Johnson-Freyd read at the Memorial Gathering for JQ Johnson on 30 July 2012.]

Dear Daddy,

I wish I could see you again.

I wish I could go hiking with you. When I was young and tired easily on hikes, you were always ready with a new story about Teddy The Dragon and his human friends and their adventures. Sometimes they'd visit Philip The Astronaut, or the sailors Sasha and Baby Bear. Or I wish we could go to another museum in another far-off city --- your appetite for museums was insatiable.

I wish I could visit you in your office. Visits to Daddy's office were always a special treat. You would take me to Alexander's Great Falafel, and you would be very excited about whatever I was learning in school, and I'd get to spend time with you while you worked.

It was during a visit to your office a little more than a year ago that I asked if you were OK with me proposing to Brian. You were ecstatic: you have a special smile that you save just for him, and you beamed that special smile all the larger when I said I wanted to marry him. I'm so glad the two of you could spend the last four years getting to know each other, talking about books and libraries. He loves you quite a lot.

Brian and I were married as planned on July 8th, at your house in the Adirondacks. The wedding was joyful, but quieter without you there. You were certainly there in the hearts of everyone present. You would have liked the wedding dinner: salmon and risotto and a Willamette Valley Pinot Noir you introduced us to, and a Willamette Valley Pinot Gris that we didn't recognize and wanted to share with you.

I wish you could have given us a toast. I wish you had a chance to take us each aside for advice on being a husband. And when we end up having children, I wish you could give me advice on being a father. (Don't worry, Daddy --- that's still a ways off.) But you were such an excellent husband and father that all I really have to do is follow your example.

Still, I wish I could see you again.

Love,
Theo