Joshua Bolton grew up in northern Virginia, not far from where the gurgling waters of Little Difficult Run flow through Fox Mill Woods.

Many people and much inspiration directed him along the path that led here today. He carries a tremendous amount of gratitude toward those who shared their wisdom and encouraged him to proceed onward with a spirit of adventure. He wishes to mention his dearest old friends in Virginia with whom he first experienced matters of the spirit and of the imagination. He wants to acknowledge the community of poets in Northampton who are so dedicated to one another and to the creative, good life. And he wants to raise up his RRC classmates, their families, and all of his professors and rabbis—their friendship, their mentorship and their visions have been terribly inspirational to him.

To his wife, Natalie Lyalin, he says: Thank you for accompanying me on this big path. Now let’s head off toward our future (Oren Veadous Wolf) with great lightness of being and love.

And to his family: May we go forward with hope. Dad’s memory is a source of inspiration, and it is a call to live with compassion, honesty, and joy—Vade’s greatest attributes. I love you and am so grateful for your lifelong companionship.

And, of course, Josh thanks the Mysterious Source of Life—the Name of Names—the Holy One, blessed be He.

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A Story From Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

There is a story of a king who sent his son a great distance to study all the wisdom of the world. The son went, studied and returned wise. One day the king asked his son to take a massive rock and place it upon the roof of the house. But the rock was too huge and the king’s son could not lift it. Unable to fulfill his father’s request, the king’s son was terribly upset. When his father found him sulking in his room, the king said to him, “You thought I wanted you to lift that giant stone? Even with all your wisdom you thought I asked you to do something as impossible as that!? All I intended was for you to take a hammer and smash the stone into a bunch of little pieces—then you could have placed the stone on the roof!” Just like this, God wants us to lift our hearts up to heaven. But our hearts are these giant heavy stones—totally impossible to lift. All you can do is take a hammer—which is speech—and shatter the stony heart. Thus you can lift your heart up to heaven.