

THE WEDDING OF
MARGO STERN AND MATTHEW BRINEGAR
AUGUST 31, 2013

OPENING WORDS

We're gathered here this beautiful day because Margo and Matthew have asked us to be with them as they declare their love before us and unite in marriage. They enter into marriage in affirmation of the bond of love they have found and tested in their committed relationship. In a bold step into the future, Matthew and Margo join their lives together now, in search of a greater fulfillment than they can achieve alone. In taking this risk, they are stating their faith in what can be.

All of you here today help to make this commitment possible. Through this ceremony, you, too join with Margo and Matthew in this joyful step towards love's fulfillment. Your presence, your full engagement in this moment is important to them both—so important, in fact, that they have asked me to encourage you to notice that they have invited you to trust in the craft of their talented photographer and to set your own cameras aside. In this precious window of time, they invite you to witness their union through your own eyes and ears alone, without the filter of a lens or screen.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Matthew, Margo: In presenting yourselves here today, you are formally announcing your desire to pledge your love to one another for life. Each of you has chosen the other as your life's partner, and today you promise to make your love for each other your ongoing choice. Your faith in this commitment should grow and mature and endure. No human ties are more

tender and no vows more sacred than those you now assume. Do you now choose to enter this sacred union?

RESPONSE: *We do.*

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO CANNOT BE WITH US

As we gather together here to share in the celebration of their marriage, Matthew and Margo also ask us to take a moment's reflection to remember those who are with us in spirit. Margo particularly welcomes the remembrance of her grandmother Louise Ronne. The care she shared with Margo, and the care of all whom you call to mind, lives on in the love that shapes this ceremony.

RECOGNITION OF PARENTS & GUESTS

A union of marriage is at its strongest when it is created with loving purpose, maintained by abiding good will, and renewed by active intention and commitment. These intentions and commitments flower best over time with the support of family and friends. All of you here today have shared in the process that has made this commitment possible, and Margo and Matthew want you to know how grateful they are. In particular, I ask you, the parents who have nurtured these two: Do you bestow your blessing on their union?

Parents: *We do.*

READING: “AFTER THE PARTY”

And when everyone had gone
and just the two of us were left
among the empty glasses and dirty ashtrays,
how beautiful it was to know that you
were there like an oasis,
alone with me at the night's edge,
and you were lasting, you were more than time,
you were the one who wouldn't leave
because one pillow
one warmth
was going to call us again
awake to the new day,
together, laughing, disheveled.

-Julio Cortazar

PREFACE TO THE VOWS

As you prepare to share the words you have each crafted to vow your commitment to one another, let us all be reminded that these vows have no hidden, magical power within themselves. It is you, through your continued intention and commitment, who give them reality and meaning. In the days to come, your commitment to one another will need to be expressed in

many different ways and reiterated again and again through the coming years. The expression in today's vows is your aspiration. It will remain as a goal toward which you will continue to strive.

Vows

Exchange of Rings

As with any ceremony, this one comes with ceremonial objects and rituals rife with meaning—in the case of most religious objects, myriad meanings with differing interpretations that can spark arguments across a country or across a dinner table. While these interpretations can cause conflict, they can also provide great comfort.

Margo and Matthew have chosen to bring some of these rituals into their ceremony today for that reason, and I'm privileged to share with you Margo's thoughts about their interpretation.

They stand under the chuppah, the traditional Jewish four-poles-and-a-sheet, meant to symbolize (among other things, of course), the home they are creating together. While many chuppahs nowadays come with sparkling lights and pyrotechnic displays, the traditional chuppah is meant to be sparse, indicating that the only thing that makes a home are the people in it, not their possessions.

Today, Margo and Matthew will exchange rings. Not only because Margo likes jewelry, but so each can be reminded daily of the promises they have made to each other here today, in front of you.

And finally, Matthew will throw caution to the wind, smashing a glass to seal the ceremony. This particular ritual has many interpretations (some more indelicate than others), and they range from referencing the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem to tempering our gaiety here today. The couple sees it as a dramatic breaking from the past and a shattering of their contained, sole selves. Also, it's fun. That's why you all will yell "Mazel Tov" once he does it.

May I have the rings?

As you place the ring on Margo/Matthew's hand, please say with me:

I give you this ring as a pledge of my love and loyalty.

Pronouncement of Marriage

Margo and Matthew have agreed to join in marriage in the presence of their family and friends, declaring their love for one another, and joining hands and exchanging rings as a token of their love.

The authority to marry, in its true meaning, is vested in me by their love, by the love of you who gather to witness and to celebrate with them, and by the Power of Love in which we all our have a part. That authority has long been the only one I would invoke in these moments. But now, at long last, this state of ours is no longer abusing its authority by declaring that some marriages are worthy of recognition while others are not. Therefore, for the

first time ever, I can also say that by virtue of the authority vested in me by the State of California, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

KISS!

SMASH!