

Prof. dr. sc. Zoran Zgaga
(13. travnja 1956 – 3. veljače 2011)



U spomen na Zorana

Dragi Vinko, Pietro, draga Inja, draga Lado, dragi prijatelji, ne računajte danas na moju rječitost jer Zoran je bio moj najdraži, najlojalniji i najbliži prijatelj.

Dragi Zorane, dragi moj »Bucu«, puno radije bih ti se obratio uz more gledajući na pučinu gdje smo često zajednički gledali u isti beskraj. Tvoja ljubav prema moru s vremenom ti se ugradila u lice, pa izgledaš više kao pravi stari morski vuk nego kao neki profesor genetike. Znam da ćeš mi blagim smiješkom oprostiti ovaj kompliment!

Kao kolega prenosim obitelji sućut kolega, vrhunskih genetičara iz cijeloga svijeta, profesora Roda Rothsteina, Jamesa Habera i Michaela Resnicka, jer su znali da je Zoran Zgaga vodeći molekularni genetičar Hrvatske. To se manje znalo u Hrvatskoj zbog jedne od Zoranovih vrlina, a to je samozatajnost. Ti si se Zorane klonio približavanja bilo kojem vidu slave...valjda da ti ne kontaminira tvoj bogati privatni život...i imao si pravo.

Naše poznanstvo počelo je 1974. kada si se kao devetnaestogodišnjak ušuljao među postdiplomce na moj prvi kolegij molekularne genetike i tad smo se upoznali. Ubrzo mi je bilo očigledno da si razumijevanjem eksperimenata i oduševljenjem za znanost bio daleko iznad svojih kolega postdiplomaca. Kasnije smo dugo tkali naše prijateljstvo, kako u laboratoriju tako još više i prisnije na moru, roneći zajedno, ploveći zajedno, dijeleći divne trenutke ribolova, kuhanja i pričanja.

Tako sam dobio svoga najboljeg prijatelja.

Po svojoj osebujnoj ličnosti bio si i ostat ćeš nam jedinstvena, harmonična kombinacija Šveđanina, Dalmatinca i, naravno, Zagrepčanina. Kako si u tome uspio?

Jedini si od mojih prijatelja na čiju lojalnost, privatnost i sigurnost uopće nisam ni mislio, jer se podrazumijevala. Bio si nam najsolidniji dio izabrane familije koji bi redovito uradio više nego što obeća.

Tu si vrlinu razradio i u znanstvenom istraživanju. U vremenu u kojem su uspjesi u radu važniji od samoga rada, ti si Zorane uzorna iznimka. Za tebe je ljepota istraživačkoga rada bila i ostala jedina motivacija.

I tako si svojom samozatajom postigao da većina Hrvata ne zna da danas gubi svoga daleko najboljeg molekularnoga genetičara! Razvio si umijeće samozatajnosti do svog krajnjeg cilja – neprimjetljivosti, osim za svoje najbliže. Sve bogatstvo tvoga vrlo aktivnog života dijelio si velikodušno s familijom i s uskim krugom tvojih prijatelja.

Sa svojim omiljenim suradnicima Ivanom Krešimirom Svetecom i Berislavom Lisničem otkrio si dva fenomena u domeni stabilnosti genoma, ali nisi upotrijebio opravdani PR da ih »prodaš« u javnosti, jer Zgaga ne prodaje, Zgaga daje, onima koji su tu, u blizini. Ja ti čestitam na tim radovima i nadam se, radi tvojih mladih kolega, da će se to što ste otkrili na daleko i dugo slušati.

Bio si toliko zdrav i snažan da još ne vjerujem zašto ovo govorim...Tvoja snaga davala je svima nama sigurnost, a nikome nije bila opasnost. Tvoja izdržljivost i nordijska racionalnost i solidnost često su me zatekle nenaviknutog da netko drugi meni usadi osjećaj sigurnosti...Često sam bio zbunjen dojmom da si mi ti, dvanaest godina mlađi, kao neki stariji i mudriji brat. Koliko god si bio snažan, bio si vrlo osjetljiv i zbunjen kada je to bilo primjetno.

Grozan je danas dan, snaga se urušila...

Moram informirati vas, suradnike i studente da vas je Zoran obožavao, jer to vjerojatno vama nikada nije rekao. Samozatajnost zna zatajiti puno toga. Naprimjer, Zoran vjerojatno nije pokazivao koliko se očinski brinuo za sudbine svojih suradnika, ali je zato meni o tome često i dugo pričao.

I zato Zorane ako danas plačemo za tobom, i zbog tebe, to nije samo i isključivo zbog tvoga peha – neke mutacije u stanici koja se prerano pojavila i skratila ti život, već – da posudim od Pirandella – plačemo i radi sebe. Plačemo, jer onoga dijela nas koji je isključivo rastao i živio u tebi više nema – gubitkom tebe, zauvijek je izgubljen.

Ali onda, neka barem onaj dio tebe koji živi u nama nastavi živjeti, neka raste, neka nas oplemenjuje.

Hvala ti za tvoju ljubav, dragi prijatelju. Neka ti morski vjetar pjeva, morski vuče!

Miroslav Radman

Prof. Dr. Sc. Zoran Zgaga
(April 13, 1956 – February 3, 2011)



To the memory of Zoran

Dear Vinko, Pietro, Inja and Lada, dear friends, don't count on my eloquence today because Zoran was my dearest, most devoted and closest friend.

Dear Zoran, my dear Buco, I'd rather speak to you by the sea, where we so often used to look at its distant horizons. Your love for the sea was with time engraved into your face, so you look more like a true sea wolf than a professor of genetics. I know you will forgive me this compliment with one of your gentle smiles!

As a colleague, I am expressing deepest sympathies to the family from our colleagues, distinguished geneticists from all over the world, Professors Rod Rothstein, James Haber and Michael Resnick, because they knew that Zoran Zgaga was a leading molecular biologist in Croatia. This was not so much known in Croatia because of Zoran's greatest virtue, modesty. Zoran, you were always avoiding familiarity with any form of glory...perhaps so it wouldn't spoil your ample private life...and you were right.

Our acquaintance began in 1974, when you, as a 19-year-old, sneaked among the postgraduates to my first course in molecular genetics, and then we met. Soon it became clear to me that your understanding of experiments and your thrill with science was far above those of your colleagues. Later, we were weaving our friendship for long, in the lab, and even more closely at sea, diving together, sailing together, sharing wonderful moments while fishing, cooking and over conversations.

That is how I got my best friend.

With your extraordinary personality, you were, and always will remain a unique, harmonic combination of a Swede, Dalmatian and, of course, Zagreber. How did you manage that? You are the only one of my friends whose loyalty, privacy and safety I never gave a thought to, because this all went without saying. You were the firmest of the chosen family who would always do more than promised.

You developed this virtue in science, too. In the times when success in work is more important than work itself, you, Zoran, were a rare exception. For you, the beauty of research was and remained the only motivation.

So, with your modesty, you achieved that the majority of Croats do not know that today they are losing their far the best molecular geneticist! The art of modesty you developed to its final aim – invisibility, except for your closest ones. The abundance of your extremely active life you shared generously with your family and closest circle of your friends.

With your favourite colleagues Ivan Krešimir Svetec and Berislav Lisnić you discovered two phenomena in the domain of stability of genome, but you didn't use the justified PR to 'sell' them to the public, because Zgaga doesn't sell, Zgaga gives, to those who are there, close by. I congratulate you on these works, and hope, for the sake of your young coworkers, that what you discovered would be listened to far and long.

You were so healthy and strong that I still can't believe I'm saying this... Your strength gave all of us the sense of safety, it was never a threat. Your endurance and Nordic rationality and sturdiness so often caught me unprepared that somebody else should give me the feeling of safety... I was often confused by the impression that you, who were 12 years younger than me, were like some kind of older and wiser brother to me. However strong you were, you were defensive and confused when someone noticed it.

It is a horrible day today. The strength has caved in...

I must let you know, his colleagues and students, that Zoran adored you, because he probably never told you. Modesty can do that. For example, Zoran probably never showed how much of a fatherly care he had for the destinies of his coworkers, but he talked to me a lot about that.

And that is why, my dear Zoran, if we are crying for you, and because of you, that is not just because of your bad luck – some kind of mutation in the cell that appeared too soon and ended your life, but – to borrow from Pirandello – we are crying for ourselves. We are crying because of that part of us that grew and lived only in you is gone – losing you, it is gone forever.

Then again, let at least that part of you that lives in us continue to live, let it grow and make us better persons.

Thank you for your love, dear friend. Let the sea wind sing to you, sea wolf!

Miroslav Radman