

March 21, 2009

Dear Dr. Adams:

I am sending you a photograph of myself taken on Valentine's Day, 2009, just a few minutes before I performed in a dance concert at a major cultural institution in New York City.

Thirteen months had passed since you and your team performed mitral valve and tricuspid valve surgery on me at Mount Sinai when that picture was taken, a little over a year lived through the prism of my heart, and I now have the opportunity to publicly thank all the wonderful people who made my experience so successful and so transcendently beautiful.

To Dr. Chikwe, for her daily visits, which was like having a ray of sunshine enter my hospital room; to Dr. Anyanwu, who in his quiet way, was one of my saviors; to Ms. Leventhal, the nurse in the pre-surgical holding area and the operating room, who made me feel that I was on a stage set ("lights, action, cameras"); to Dr. Reich, the Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology, who had me laughing as he wheeled me into the operating room and got me so involved in a conversation, that I didn't know I was about to go under; to Edith, the nurse practitioner, whose no-nonsense approach to my questions, made me keel over in gales of laughter; to Lorna, my day nurse in the Intensive Care Unit, who knew just what medication would ease my pain and who said to me, as I tried to get up from my wheelchair, "Tall and proud, Margaret, tall and proud"; to Theresa Kearns, who scheduled my initial consultation with you, making it seem as if I was going to a delightful tea party and who later visited me in the Intensive Care Unit; and most of all to you, for saving me, for making me whole and for your kindness and compassion.

My heart opened, literally and figuratively on that day and since then my creative juices have never been so abundant. Among many disciplines, including dancing, drawing and collages, I have been writing essays about my experiences at Mount Sinai, one of which I am sending along with this letter.

Love to all!

Margaret G.