

*Phyllis Grosskurth*

### **Tribute to Adele Wiseman**

I first met Adele Wiseman in the spring of 1966 at a Learned Societies conference in Sherbrooke. I spoke to her admiringly about *The Sacrifice* and she responded warmly. On the way back to Montreal a group of us shared a ride. Someone made the remark that one never knew what crawly thing would emerge if one kicked over a rock. Adele responded, "Yes, but you might find something beautiful too." From that moment I knew I was going to love her.

I also learned to admire her professionally. I was on the committee that appointed her Writer-in-Residence at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s. She was extraordinarily effective in her dedication to the appointment.

But it was our friendship of talk I remember most. Twenty-five years of talk. We learned a great deal about each other as we talked over the telephone, across her kitchen table, or at her groaning board—she was the most hospitable and generous of friends.

What did we talk about? People mostly. Adele had very perceptive insights about people. In her spectrum there were few greys. She had her dislikes—probably justifiably—but there were many, many others whom she loved deeply. No one could be more enthusiastic about her friends. Innumerable times I have heard her catalogue their attributes, their talents and often their problems which concerned her deeply.

Nothing gave her more pleasure than to be surrounded by her friends. Just before Christmas a group of us gathered on the roof of the Park Plaza. She surveyed the scene with that expression of serene contentment

I knew so well. We were all aware that she was dying and it was the last time I remember seeing her walk any distance.

Then Tillie Olsen came from San Francisco in March to see her and this time a group gathered around her bed. She loved having us there. She loved life passionately, and she put up a tremendous fight to live, but she also faced death with courage and dignity.

I am going to miss that breathy voice at the end of the telephone sounding as though it was the most wonderful thing in the world that one had phoned.

Adele, I am going to miss your warmth and your integrity. I wish I could talk to you once more. There is still so much to be said.

Ciao Adele.