

come. And we really tried to keep it a grass roots human and not a media event. Daily telephone calls to and from Margaret. Daily long lists arriving by mail, lists of ideas, lists of people, lists of things she'd do and I might do and you and Geoff Hancock and Alice Munro might do.

And people responded. We got in touch with some crackerjack young people in the Chinese community and the whole Chinese community responded. Suddenly I was besieged by phone calls from people who had heard that Ding Ling was coming: scholars, Sinophiles, lovers of literature, admirers of the great lady, the great fighter, the great writer. It was our great good luck too, to have an equivalent figure, in Canadian terms, to co-host our guests. And they did hit it off.

I still have Margaret's timetable for greeting them when they arrived at Winters College. I had done a huge shop on Dundas. Margaret and Geoff Hancock and I arrived at Winters early, loaded down with packages of stuff we intended to heat up for my quite possibly erroneous version of the combinations necessary for a really sumptuous Chinese tea, as well as for our guests to nosh on when they were alone in the apartment. After admiring the nifty little flat room by room we came to the kitchen nook and suddenly realized that there was no stove. Panic. A great deal of rushing up and down corridors. A great deal of wringing of hands by Margaret and me, of tragic striding to and fro in the little apartment, and any minute the guests due to arrive! The day saved at the last minute by Geoff Hancock, mock not the mock heroic. Geoff found his way to the campus pub, and got them to heat up the goodies.

What a happy afternoon that was for us, exuberant with relief and delight. I re-

member Richard Liu, who travelled with and translated for Ding Ling and Chen Ming, struck just the right note as far as Margaret and I were concerned, of attentiveness and filial concern. We talked about things that engage us all, about the survival of the human and the humane, about the future of the children, all the children, about how pleased and honoured we were, about how it might be possible for people to learn to respect and admire and even enjoy each other after all.

I know all of this must excite the suspicion and scorn of the political and the powerful. They'll have their wars regardless, and make their profits. But those of us, like Margaret, who care enough, will at least have our say, and show that other ways are possible if we can gather the goodwill and the courage and the resolution and the persistence to insist that other ways are indeed necessary for the ultimate survival of us all.

Clara, I won't go into detail now of all the other events of that visit. Some moments stick in my mind. The Chinese Community honored us by inviting us to the banquet they threw for our illustrious guests, and what was so moving was the fact that every part of the community joined in. Ding Ling and Chen Ming even had the opportunity to swap incarceration stories with people who had been imprisoned, not by the Gang of Four, as they had been, but by the Chiang Kai Shek regime in Formosa. Crazy world, eh?

I have to confess, Margaret and I, who discovered something to laugh about on most occasions, this time got our memorable moment of life enhancing giggles when we found ourselves sheepishly admitting to each other, sotto voce, how attractive we both found the Chinese historian who was brilliantly and instantane-

ously translating for us, and enumerating to each other his positive attributes. I can still hear his sexy voice.

Happily, a wonderful variety of people, young and old, among them some of our finest scholars and linguists, feminists, artists and just plain human beings came to meet and hear our guests at the various receptions at York University. Tired though they must have been, Ding Ling, great little trouser that she was at seventy six, and Chen Ming, would not dream of foregoing the pilgrimage to Norman Bethune's birthplace or the trip to Niagara Falls. Of our original gang of seven writers, (Gary Geddes, Susanne Paradis, Robert Kroetsch, Patrick Lane, Alice Munro, Geoffrey Hancock, and me), Alice Munro and Geoff Hancock, with his new bride, Gay Allison, were there to host their various journeys in Ontario. For me, of course, the best time was the party at our house. We had taken them to dinner at a Chinese Restaurant downtown, and by the time we got home the house was already crowded with happy, celebrating people.

Several years later we threw a surprise party for Miriam Waddington on the occasion of her sixty fifth birthday, at our house. When my turn came to say something I talked of the three wonderful women writers we had celebrated in our house in recent years: Tillie Olsen, Ding Ling and Miriam Waddington. It never even occurred to me to mention Margaret Laurence, because she was there with us, celebrating, all the time. She always will be.

love,  
Adele

## MARGARET AVISON

### JUST LEFT. The Night Margaret Laurence Died.

Bare branches studded once with jewelled birds  
Someone inexorably plunders  
One by one till an  
Impoverished wintry sky from hill to  
Darkening hill reveals  
Untreasured tree-spikes, almost only  
(One hunched bird left  
His eye aglimmer there).

Waiting, dim  
Loneliness, place of  
That withdrawing vision —

More than the well of light from  
The first far planet —  
Fills, fills, fills, fills.

Mutable mortal night  
Blinds mortal day  
Still to changelessness.

The perched, askew,  
Will ruffle still as the day-ocean  
Lips in and foams towards flood of  
All emptiness exposed.