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RACHEL LEA ROSENBERG 1931-1987

She did not speak much of the circumstances of her life. Monica Serra, one of her good friends, says Rachel's last words were, "Love, beauty and liberty. These are the most important in life. The rest is duty and circumstance." Born in the Etterbek district of Brussels, Belgium, she immigrated to Brazil when her family fled the Nazi invasion. Who can say that those who resisted fared better than those who cooperated? The current West German ambassador to Brazil was a member of the Hitler youth movement; the president of Austria enjoyed a plush commission in the Nazi regime. Rachel's way was to resist oppression.

She adapted quickly to Brazilian life, married a Brazilian businessman, David Rosenberg, who she met while they were students in the United States, and raised three talented children: George, a photographer; Beatrice, a television journalist; and Carla, a biologist.

She continued to resist tyranny. During Brazil's dark days she did not yield to interrogators' threats and continued to shield a classmate who was hunted by the political police. She gave money and refuge in her own home to her friend. However, most of her work for the oppressed and disadvantaged was aimed at changing or creating institutions that could provide widespread help. At the University of São Paulo, where she was a professor for some twenty years, she created a counseling service where, without cost, adults and adolescents could receive the psychological help they needed. She also created an interdisciplinary program with the university's School of Medicine to give necessary help to parents and children.

She also worked to raise the level of understanding in the society in general. Her first book, *Psicologia dos Superdotados* (1972), drew attention to the exceptional; her second, *A Pessoa*

Como Centro (1977) with friend and colleague Carl Rogers, sketched the possibilities of person-centered approaches to education and psychotherapy. She also created a center for human development to train psychotherapists, convened large group workshops for families, and frequently appeared on cultural television to address questions concerning psychotherapy, education, and family relations.

These are the facts. I saw much more. Fighting the bumpy Avenida Marginal in São Paulo, I saw the Pinheiros River, glutted with rare combinations of poisons; I saw a cancerous poverty devouring a hillside; I saw ugly factories spewing bitter fumes over the world's fourth most crowded city; I saw reality. She said, yes, this is so. And she showed me another part of reality: the municipal flower market, a clean, wet, refreshing rainbow of sweet perfumed freshcut flowers. I saw an accepting person who unembarassingly experienced this totality: ugliness and beauty.

After its rapid ascension, I saw the crescent moon linger between the dark outlines of twin palms, a golden glow hugging its silver curvature. I saw this innovation, added by human greed and industrial decadence, and shouted that the fiber of the Americas is burning. She insisted, "Is there not something we can do to help?" I saw a compassionate person who was not only willing to participate in newness, but tried to help human realization.

I saw a person who spoke seven or eight languages (four or five of them, flawlessly) listen seriously to the words of others. I saw in this simple act not only a love of democracy but also a respect for truth.

I saw contradictions. How is it that she could have one friend who others adored and another who they despised? Truth rules out deception and tough-mindedness precludes the explanation that she lacked ability to judge and thus accepted the unpredictable in others. I believe that contradictions were alien to her: there were her friends and there were those whom she did not completely understand, who were also her friends. I saw a diverse person who accepted diversity around her as one accepts all the incompatible things that make up what we call the world.

I saw a friend, a mother, wife, sister, daughter, psychotherapist, university professor. I saw love poured into duty: Was her husband looked after? Were the children fed properly? Had she given him and her children and her clients and students the best conditions for their growth? Were there groceries in the house for the weekend? Had the bank transferred payment on a certain debt? Had she remembered to telephone an aunt in Rio and wish her a happy birthday. Though her activities were rich in duty and circumstance, I saw a person whose reality was love, beauty, and freedom.

I saw a confounder of contradictions. Though she accepted imperfection in others, she would have little of it for herself. A talented writer, her reluctance to produce an imperfect manuscript, may explain why she left us so few published words. I saw a noble woman who carried herself with European charm and dignity and had the eyes of a shy South American child. I saw a curious person who spoke as eagerly and effortlessly with a bus driver as with a foreign dignitary. I saw a sociable person, equally delighted to sip champagne at an embassy reception as she was to sip a beer, her sandy bare feet propped up on a chair, at a beachfront bar.

I have seen a life that stretched me to principle but also urged me toward simple delicacy (as Goethe also advised), "everyday at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words." I have seen a free, fresh, inquisitive breeze that responded by caressing the flowers and ruffling the neatly trimmed grass when the first words were pronounced over her grave. What have I seen? I have seen life trying to know itself.

—John Keith Wood