

### **Rosemary Sutcliff (1920-1992): A tribute by Jean Little**

Rosemary Sutcliff's sudden death in July deeply grieved people who had never met her face to face. Thousands of readers, both adults and children, felt they knew her intimately through her beautifully crafted and soul-satisfying books. She wrote over thirty. Among them were a few picture books, several retellings of legends, a couple of novels intended for adults, and her moving autobiography, *Blue remembered hills*. But she was most celebrated for her many outstanding works of historical fiction. These included her own favourite, *The eagle of the Ninth*, *Warrior Scarlet* (the one I loved best), *The mark of the horse lord*, and her recently published *The shining company*. She was one of my favourite authors for 41 years and a personal friend for 27. Reading her novel *Outcast* rescued me from a period of fear and depression and all of her books make me a better writer. For years, before I sent a manuscript in to my editor, I read it over pretending I was Rosemary. Often this led to stringent revisions. Many writers are not as kind or insightful or funny or patient as their books would have us believe. Rosemary's books gave us some wonderfully rich people, but none was more courageous, giving, entertaining, honorable or loving than she herself. My world is smaller, darker, lonelier and less full of expectancy without her.