

In the Sweep of Human Rights

(dedicated to Champa Devi Shukla & Rashida Bee)

She sweeps like Shiva's
universal dance against ignorance
cleaning up the toxic details
without fear of reprisals,
she sweeps the excuses
out from beneath the corporate
imported subsidy rug
where Mr. Executive Empire
piles up his indictment
to face criminal charges in India

Along with her neighbors -
the survivor widows of Bhopal
she sweeps up social responsibility
for the pesticide melt down,
cry's out for clean up
of drinking water,
infected water with chemicals
decayed from cyanide exposure
(just like in gas chambers)

She shares the Goldman
Environmental Award (2004)
with her compatriot, together
they sweep out the evidence
gathered in stringent investigations,
sweep out the darkest grief
holding together the ten thousand-fold losses,
sweep away the social distance
concealing chronic pesticide wounds

Let us sweep
all together at their side
gather detailed answers for accountability,
sweep justice up
with this community of down-winders,
pick up full restitution
life long health care,
the simple human rights
required like bread
like a searing freedom song
for the endangered

(and the endearing)
women of Bhopal

Larry is a West Coast poet with recent work appearing in "Citizen 32" and in NthPositionDot-Com's "Poems for Madrid." Larry values a poetry of witness and contributing to a literature of justice. He is working on a book of poems called "Mural Poems." He has been a volunteer editor with Poets Against War, reads often with several poetry series, and assists Amnesty International Puget Sound with literary, and human rights events. He can be contacted at: wordheath@yahoo.com.

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Want to help those still suffering from the world's worst industrial tragedy?

Join the Bhopal Campaign! www.studentsforbhopal.org

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To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics; to appreciate beauty; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived--that is to have succeeded.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

