

## Conclusion

My time in Java was short and full of challenges. I was constantly aware that I was seeing everything through western eyes, and that Indonesian society is extremely complex. I knew I was not seen as a farmer, but as a westerner, someone with money who could afford to travel. I wanted to sit down with the women in their houses, talk about goats and crops and gardens, but the barriers of language and culture prevented me.

Industrialization and environmental destruction will continue in countries like Java for quite some time, as governments race to catch up to what they see as western standards of living and western ideals. Women like Chandra Kirana are caught in the middle, struggling to care for their families, make a living, keep their political lives intact, and maintain their culture.

As a farmer, I struggle constantly with lack of money. My rural community slowly fragments as subdivisions appear. My family and I eat well, but increased taxation combined with rising land prices makes the future of our farm obscure. I know that small farms and rural culture are endangered all over North America. My sense of isolation from other writers and the endless work load are difficult. A lifestyle like ours is increasingly rare, for many reasons.

How I wish I could have shared with the Javanese women our sense of connection to where we live, our worries for the future. Although our lives may look different, I am sure that many of our concerns, our losses, our basic affinities with land are much the same.

*Luanne Armstrong is a writer and organic farmer in B.C. She has published two novels and one book of poetry, as well as magazine articles and essays. She teaches writing at the College of the Rockies, in Cranbrook, B.C.*

## References

- Detlor, Pamela. Field notes from Gita Pertiwi. Unpublished. Solo, Indonesia. 1993.
- Meyer, Christine, and Faith Moosang, eds. *Living with the Land. Communities Restoring the Earth*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1992.
- Shiva, Vandana, ed. *Close to Home: Women Reconnect Ecology, Health, and Development Worldwide*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1994.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. London: Zed Books, 1989.
- Shiva, Vandana. *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology, and Politics*. London: Zed Books, 1991.
- Kirana, C. Personal interview. Solo, Indonesia. May 1994.
- Gita Pertiwi (members). Personal interview. Solo, Indonesia. May 1994.
- Sontheimer, Sally, ed. *Women and the Environment, A Reader: Crisis and Development in the Third World*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991.

## LUANNE ARMSTRONG

### A Village Named Sekaralas

If, after hearing the stories told about her  
the rice goddess returned as a green spider  
or, at least, someone came by  
as a spider, miniature, round  
iridescent,  
astonishingly emerald  
and jumped up on my pants and leapt  
and jumped on a hot afternoon  
in a village whose name means  
Flower of the Forest  
and no one said anything or noticed  
that the goddess was leaping  
like an emerald  
out of the garden  
and spinning a web  
from my green cotton Canadian pants  
to the ancient wall  
while I also spun and spun  
and the garden grew in dizzy circles  
and I thought I might fall over  
all these new edges

as the goddess spun  
me dizzy  
and choking

and the green spider was  
greener than any  
emerald  
leaping and dancing  
while I sat very still and  
sweated, trying to breathe  
in the garden  
in the white brilliance  
of another  
late hot afternoon.

*Luanne Armstrong is a writer and organic farmer in B.C. She has published two novels and one book of poetry, as well as magazine articles and essays. She teaches writing at the College of the Rockies, in Cranbrook, B.C. She has previously worked as a feminist researcher and writer, a college instructor at a Native college, and director of a Women's Centre.*