

## 2 THROWING ROCKS AT THE SUN

An Interview with Teresa Leal

Joni Adamson

Teresa Leal began her activist work as a high-school student in the 1960s, working in the cotton fields surrounding Tucson and Sahuarita, Arizona, with Cesar Chavez and other members of the United Farm Workers Union (UFWU). She went on to organize Comadres, a binational group of women that addresses social, environmental, labor, and toxicity issues related to the build-up on the U.S.-Mexico border of the *maquilas*, notorious for exploiting their workers and polluting their surrounding environments. Leal is currently cochair of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), a group of eighty-five grassroots indigenous and labor groups. She is also working to organize an alliance of groups to protect the Santa Cruz River, which flows from Mexico past Nogales, Arizona, and toward Tucson, Arizona.

One week before my interview of Teresa, she was my guide for a tour of the industrial parks south of Nogales, Sonora, where workers employed in the multinationally owned *maquilas* make luggage, electronic and industrial parts, locks, and other products. She then took me through the dusty, crowded squatter villages, or *colonias*, teeming with children playing in the streets. Here, *maquila* workers live in houses made of cardboard, wooden pallets, or cinder blocks. These houses lack basic public services and the people must have their water delivered from urban Nogales wells which Teresa reports have been contaminated by industry with high levels of arsenic and heavy metals. Everywhere in the *colonias*, we saw women standing outside their houses washing their dishes and clothes in barrels filled with this contaminated water.

We then drove twenty minutes south, to the mountains overlooking Nogales, where we ate a lunch of bagels, apples, and bottled water in a sun-dappled grove of scrub oak and wild walnut trees. There, Teresa talked of her life and work. Pointing in the direction of a spring bubbling up from the

ground, she directed my vision along the steep canyon through which the water flows before it joins the Mambutu River. Her Opatá and Mayo grandparents, she explained, were descendants of the tribal peoples who had lived in these canyons long before Spanish conquest. They brought her to this spring as a child, told her the stories of her ancestors' migrations through these mountains, and taught her to love and respect her traditional homeland. She, in turn, brought her own small children to the same spring for picnics in order to instill in them a love for their birthplace.

When I asked how a mother of eight found time to battle for the environment on so many fronts, she told me she is descended from a long line of "reactionaries." Her Chinese grandfather was a member of a group who called themselves "Righteous and Harmonious Fists" and who attempted to oust foreigners from Chinese soil in 1900. The so-called "Boxer Rebellion" was put down by American and European forces and Leal's grandfather was forced to flee to Mexico, where he helped to build the railroad. Leal's father, a trained engineer who helped build Mexico's first desalinization plant but who quit his job to become a revolutionary after being inspired by Leon Trotsky in the 1940s, taught her that we must learn to live with our environment without depleting our resources. Imprisoned during certain times of his life for his work to organize laborers in the mines of Cananea, Mexico, and peasant farmers agitating for land reforms, Leal's father occasionally stole away from his work to visit his young daughter who was living with her mother just north of the international border in the United States. Leal, who had surprised her mother and the local Catholic priest by learning to read at three years old and speak English by the age of five, lovingly remembers her father's visits to her schools and never forgot the example of principled struggle he set.

Any conversation with Teresa Leal is engaging, informative, and full of good humor. Our picnic in the mountains above Nogales lasted an enjoyable two hours. However, every fifteen minutes or so, one or more large semi-trailers filled with domestic refuse from the city and industrial waste from the *maquilas* rumbled up the road on which we had come, drowning our talk and filling the air with dust. Though the view towards Nogales was a breathtaking vista of forested mountains and lush canyons, we had only to turn around to be confronted by the "sanitary landfill." On the ground behind us, bits of refuse—toilet paper and food wrappers and aluminum cans—were scattered through the brush and clinging to the wildflowers. Teresa told me that chemicals dumped by the *maquilas* at the landfill seep into the water of her beloved spring, then flow into the Mambutu River. From there, the

Mambutu winds five kilometers south before being pumped into a system that sends the water north to be recharged into the Nogales water system. Thus, Teresa is concerned about the spring not only because it is associated with ancestral traditions and happy family memories, but also because the water and the chemicals in it are being sent back to Nogales where they are consumed by residents. Teresa regularly sends samples from the spring to a lab so that the chemicals dumped by the maquilas and seeping from the landfill into the spring water can be identified and measured.

With all these things in mind, I went to Teresa's home, located just a few blocks north of the international border in Nogales, Arizona, on July 17, 2000. The following transcript is a condensed version of our six-hour conversation, which concentrated on Teresa's lifelong work as an activist.

**Joni Adamson:** Can you describe your early experience working with Cesar Chavez and the UFWU and speak to how it informs your activist work today?

**Teresa Leal:** Back then, we didn't call what we were doing "environmental activism." We just called it "survival." I remember when I started working with the UFWU in the cotton fields in what is now Sahuarita, Arizona. The issues of course were very much tied to chemicals, the planes that would spray the people that were bent over picking the cotton with pesticides. It was both a human rights issue and a toxicology issue. Yet, we did not call it an environmental movement; it was just the "*movimiento de la raza*."

I would get out of high school and I would go into the fields to distribute flyers to the workers. I would question the pilots of the little sprayer planes to see when they would be spraying and often they would share their schedules and that is the information I would put on the flyers. So that was a way to form a straight line between the spraying schedules and the people because we could not get the bosses to tell the people when they were going to spray. They would never commit to giving us forewarning about when they were going to spray. So we were all constantly on the go.

We also tried to get the workers to speak up for themselves. We would tell them, "Go and ask the boss, ask the supervisor, will you spray in the early morning or in the late afternoon?" We encouraged the workers to protect themselves. But for economic reasons, the workers needed to keep on picking as much cotton as time would allow. They were afraid of being fired. By staying in the fields and quote "protecting" themselves with handkerchiefs and some cover, they believed they could continue picking while the spray-

ing was going on. They didn't understand how dangerous it was. Because they would go home contaminated with chemicals, the barracks where they lived with their families, with their children, were also contaminated. It was a human rights issue, definitely.

However, people who are barely surviving rarely have the luxury of haggling over terms. They can't afford to call it "just" an environmental movement or "just" a social movement, just green stuff, just brown stuff. We call it "survival at its finest." In retrospect, I know that this was a very environmentally based operation. But our movement was interconnected with human rights, labor rights, gender rights, and environmental rights and this reality—of interconnectedness—still guides our actions and campaigns today.

**Joni Adamson:** What were the events that led you to become active in the fight to improve living and working conditions for maquila workers and organize Comrades, a grass-roots organization of women struggling to empower women and children in the barrios of Nogales?

**Teresa Leal:** At first, when I was still a young mother, people started coming to me to ask me questions because I was educated and could speak English. They would ask, "Do you know what chemical this is that I am working with at the factory? The label is written in English." They wanted me to translate. My desire to help grew into an idea we call, "Comadres." *Comadres* actually means "co-mothers." As Latina women we've always been told that women are "smaller and weaker than men." Also, in our culture, comadres are put down by the machos; they are considered *mitoterias*. *Mitoterias* comes from *mitote*, which means "gossip." *Mitoterias* are gossip. But we are changing the meaning of "gossip" from negative gossip to positive gossip. We put out the good *mitote*, or good gossip. We get out the news about what's going on in the villages, or colonias, and in the factories. We share information.

Some comadres are individuals helping individuals. But other comadres are community-based comadres. They're the comadres that help not only individuals, but also share the results of their efforts with their community. They're scavengers; they find materials that can be used to help build shelters for workers who have just come to the community. They scavenge food, clothes. The people who are seeking aid see what the comadres are doing and go to them for help. The type of women who tend to be attracted to this type of organizational work are what I call "macro-comadres"! [laughter] They're the ones challenging the system, challenging the government, and trying to stop

the railroad tanker cars filled with toxic materials that roll through our communities. They're yelling about the fact that there's no water, no electricity, no police, no safeguards. Some comadres in the colonias are well versed in one skill and others in another. Some are very good at getting electricity introduced into their community. Some are good at making people aware of the chemicals that are in the barrels that the people scavenge from the factories to hold their water. They tell people that the barrels have previously held toxic substances that contaminate their drinking water. They tell people they must line the barrels with concrete or heavy plastic to keep their water from becoming contaminated. They give people that kind of information.

**Joni Adamson:** How did Comadres first become aware of the ways in which toxins were affecting maquila workers and other members of the community and getting into the water supply?

**Teresa Leal:** I remember the story of one comadre. Her situation was one of the first that got us involved with the issue of toxics. Her name was Panchita. That was in '72 and she was working for Samsonite making suitcases. She was working at the maquila and going to Comadre meetings in the colonia where she lived. She called me aside one day. "I know this has nothing to do with the colonia," she said, "and I don't want to take much of your time but I want to know, since you speak English, if you could tell me what this label says." She brought me some of the material she was handling. Since she couldn't read English, she didn't know what it was. She said, "Something in this material that I'm handling is giving me a lot of problems. Not just me, but a lot of other women." I looked and read the label and the material was fiberglass. The workers in the Samsonite factory had to sew fiberglass material. She was sewing fiberglass with four needles at the same time; that's how they made the liners for the suitcases. I explained to her how sewing through that material created microscopic little shards of glass that fly through the air and into her clothes and body. That's why she had all these rashes.

Some days her legs would bleed so bad that her pants would stick to her legs. She said she had taken her complaint to the company doctor. He told her to take down her pants and he doused alcohol on her legs to put out the bleeding and then, despite her pain, sent her back to the line. She told me, "It's getting worse and worse, it's not getting any better. The doctor tells me that this is mange. And that's the reason why I wanted to talk to you in private because mange is a dirty dog's disease." The doctor told her, "You

don't clean your house; you live in the dump and that's why you have mange. Because your hygiene is so bad." She told him, "I take a bath every day." She was very embarrassed because he said that she had mange. She got suspicious when the same doctor told her friend that the bleeding was the result of cirrhosis. You know, from alcohol, the disease you get when you drink. Her friend didn't drink.

Later, these two women started talking about it quietly to friends, and then another woman came up and said that the doctor had told her she probably had leprosy. That's when they all said, "We're going to ask Teresa about this." We started making a lot of noise and of course having Comadres meetings in the colonia. That's how we began getting involved in toxicology issues. So you see the beauty of word-of-mouth strategies, of mitote, of gossip. Once it starts going, you can't stop it. That's how Comadres uses the power of "gossip."

**Joni Adamson:** Can you tell me a little more about your work in the colonias?

**Teresa Leal:** Colonias are a phenomenon that developed simultaneously all along the U.S.-Mexico border. When the maquilas came in, they did not have a social agenda; maquila officials didn't give a hoot about the influx of people or where they were going to live.

When people first come to the border looking for work in the maquilas, they can get a job right away because of the high turn-over rate in the maquila work force. They get the job, but they may not have a house, they may not have furniture, they may not have a car, all of which makes it possible to keep a job. They can't count on the maquilas to provide housing either. So they start looking for ways to obtain housing, but they will not have any money for one month because the maquilas keep their first two weeks pay until they quit or get fired. So, the workers don't get paid until they have worked their second two weeks. Imagine coming here with nothing and trying to survive for a month without housing or money!

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution says that every Mexicano has a constitutional right to a piece of land. My father and my uncle spent half their lives in prison for teaching people about the use of this constitutional right, which came about because of the Agrarian Reform of 1917 and Emiliano Zapata. I knew about Article 27 because of my family and my education. I began to see that we could use Article 27 as an organizational tool and I began to counsel people on how to do that. Of course Article 27 was

watered down during the presidency of Salinas but not repealed; collective farms are no longer administered collectively and land can be owned individually. This means that a giant corporation like Green Giant can (and does) come in and offer individual members of a communal farm money for their land, and the individuals have the right to sell. But Article 27 was never fully dismantled because the idea of communal land ownership is so dear to the Mexican people. It is still legal for a community of people who do not own land to challenge huge landowners or "*latifundisios*" for a plot of land because Article 27 forbade owning too much land. So Article 27 can still be used as a basis for squatter's rights. If a squatter stays on his or her land for five years, they can achieve ownership.

Using Article 27 as our authority, we began to take over small plots of unoccupied land—ten by twenty meters—wherever we could find it, being careful to only select plots owned by *latifundisios*. We call these takeovers, "invasions." People set up little shacks made out of wooden pallets, cardboard, and plastics in order to be able to shelter themselves. Eventually, when they have more time and are working, they build something more concrete—cinder block is the most popular. *Comadres* gives people the organizing skills and knowledge they need to accomplish these invasions, to start working on things, and Article 27 gives them the legal right to do so. When a group of people come together for a planned invasion, the result is a small squatter village, or *colonia*.

Today there's some incipient planning by the government and by the *maquilas* in order to stem the incredible turnover of the workforce. So one of the ways that many of these *maquilas* have found to entice workers into their fold and to retain them is to "invest" in training them for peak production and quality. Also, the *maquilas* have moved to provide housing for their workers. They are developing "satellite cities" that provide everything: the school, the church, the grocery store.

**Joni Adamson:** Could you describe the events that resulted in the creation of SNEEJ and explain how so many diverse groups and people find common ground on which to work for common goals?

**Teresa Leal:** In 1991 we had the First National People of Color Environmental Summit which resulted in the realization that the issues that were affecting people of color were also affecting low income people. But at that time, there weren't any significant groups or movements within this grassroots network of people of color which were effectively influencing decisions

about economic development, trade, and the environment. Greenpeace and the Sierra Club—the mainstream environmental groups—were doing it, but they were doing more conservation and preservation. Very green ecology, save the whales, you know. But the mainstream groups were not speaking to the issues that concerned people of color—water rights in Colorado, uranium mining in the sovereign Indian nations, for example. We realized we had to do something about it.

What this movement is really about is people speaking for themselves. We came out of the summit and here, in the Southwest, we formed a network of labor groups, indigenous groups, and community groups. We stress that movements do not exist if there isn't a democratic process, a permanent rotation of information and leadership. One of our first campaigns as a network was a leadership development campaign. In fact, our biggest endeavor is training. We don't do politicking or lobbying; we do training and teach people how to organize.

**Joni Adamson:** Can you describe some of the training workshops you've run?

**Teresa Leal:** We are working on what we call a "just transition," which is not about "free trade," but "just trade." We try to prepare workers for globalization so they will not be victims of globalization. The real problem with globalization is that it threatens people's cultures and identity, and an identity is necessary for people to consider that they have something to fight for, that they have something to defend, that they have something to care for. Our workshops teach people about things that can help them defend and protect their cultures, identities, and lifestyles. We also teach them about legal systems, about lawyers, and about lawsuits. We teach in a way they can understand so they can do something about the things that threaten their identities and environments. We teach them how to work together, to network, and to access resources. We also teach them about sustainable economic development in their communities. Economic development is a thing that we've needed. In order to afford to stay in the movement, you have to be self-sustaining.

**Joni Adamson:** What are your goals as cochair of SNEEJ?

**Teresa Leal:** My goal is to continue helping the network. We have worked very traditionally before, much as we did in the 60s. Now we need to use

technology, we need to work with other networks through this technology. We need to develop life schools or leadership schools in different areas to teach our youth and our local groups how to defend the defendable. And that's something that's a real challenge because instead of becoming macro, such as the corporations do when they become macro, we've got to come back to the local groups, but use new models that interface with high technology. And that's a real challenge because it takes money, technical expertise, and training.

My last goal as cochair is very important and has to do with gender. The movement has always been mostly women. It's been very, very balanced. And of course being a woman, "very balanced" means three women to one man! That's very balanced. [laughter]

**Joni Adamson:** So your goal is to keep gender balance?

**Teresa Leal:** Not just to keep that balance, but to have our organization give even more support to women. As time goes on and economics get worse and politics move even more to the right, women are getting booted out of the system. Our network has to be intentional about helping the women who are getting booted out of the system, for example, with food stamps. I myself am very [pause] "decapitalized" not "poor"! I like the word "decapitalized" so much better than "poor." [laughter] But it has never occurred to me to go out to ask for food stamps. I would be very embarrassed to ask for food stamps. I'd rather live under a tree. But women who are now receiving food stamps are limited to a certain amount of years. The government gives you help, then they tell you to learn to live without it. But if you're getting food stamps from the U.S. Department of Economic Security (DES) and you start working—say you start earning a small weekly wage—immediately, DES tells you, "We're gonna cut off your food stamps." It's like castigating people for trying to get out of the urban poverty cycle. So people shy away from getting a part-time job and from getting more education because they believe they are gonna be punished for it. So my quarrel with food stamps is that they keep you poor. People like to see you under the boot, on drugs, being flagellated by a husband, or mired in prostitution; then they'll warm up to you and take care of you. But if they see you getting on your feet, then you're no longer important. These kinds of issues affect women much more than they affect men and that's the reason why I'd like to see SNEEJ working to support women in a very committed way.

**Joni Adamson:** You recently traveled to Seattle to participate in the protests staged at the World Trade Organization's meetings. This demonstration has been described as a protest against globalism. Can you speak to the significance of the fight against globalism for the environmental justice movement in general?

**Teresa Leal:** SNEEJ participates in very few political events. Events are good to prove a point, but it's not the everyday work we do. We did feel that it was important to go to Seattle, however, because of the significance of how global institutions such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization and multinational corporations are attempting to take over the agendas of local peoples and regions and create these umbrella agendas which sidestep local/regional legal requirements. Moreover, institutions like the World Trade Organization want to control local and regional health and education policies. Corporations like Monsanto want to take over natural life, create genetic warehouses, control the production of seeds, even indigenous seeds. We have to stop this at any cost. In Seattle, we wanted to join forces with other environmentalist groups, with the turtle people, the whale people, with the monks from Tibet, with the "Raging Grannies."

**Joni Adamson:** The Raging Grannies?

**Teresa Leal:** Oh, they were so neat! They were out there yelling, "You're spoiling the earth for our grandchildren. We want our grandchildren to eat apple pie without pesticides!" [Laughter] They were from everywhere; Raging Grannies from here, from Argentina, from every country; they're the mothers of victims of violence, but they're getting older now. So, now they're the grannies! The Buddhist monks were also there, with their big flowing robes, which they were using to protect people from the tear gas. They were picking up the canisters and throwing them to the side. Some of them were carrying bags full of water and they would get the tear gas canisters and put them into the water, which neutralizes the gas. There were some contemplative friars who, with their arms crossed as if they were praying, were forming barriers so that the military couldn't get past them to reach the demonstrators. There were Indian tribes that were playing their drums. There were turtle people who had come to advocate for the rights of turtles worldwide. They were dressed as turtles, with these big shells on their back. They were

using their shells to protect people from the rubber bullets being shot by the police. Bob Marley music was playing, so we were singing, "Get up, get up, stand up for your rights." For me, the most impressive realization that emerged from this event was, "This is what democracy looks like."

The grannies—and all the other groups which gathered in Seattle—were there to show that people need to become involved. I came back from Seattle convinced that we have to come out of our little trenches. We get so entrenched and we don't want to share our trenches or causes with anyone else. That has to stop; we have to work together. We are overcoming a lot of the barriers that have kept us insulated from each other, not agreeing with each other, and not agreeing with those with green agendas. So the fight against globalism has united a lot of diverse groups that previously never worked together or that ignored each other:

**Joni Adamson:** From your perspective, why do all these groups need to come together to fight against global imperatives?

**Teresa Leal:** The air is for all of us; the water is for all of us. Shit and pollution, toxic substances, do not ask for permission to come into your house; they do not need a passport to cross the border. Without permission, these substances come into our lives. We can't say, oh that person has cancer because they're poor. No, cancer hits everybody. People are dying all over the world, in part, because cancer can result from the release of POPs, or Persistent Organic Pollutants, into the environment. These toxins can find their way into everyone's house, whether they're rich or poor.

I learned about this reality very early in my life. I remember when I was working with the UFWU, I was cautious about warning women who were picking in the fields about their babies. I was very proud to see them so bent on breast-feeding. At the same time, Nestle was just as bent on corporate profiteering and on replacing mothers' milk with formula. And while I was happy to see that women wanted to breast-feed their babies, I knew that they would often carry their babies on their backs even when the sprayers would come along. So the babies would get the chemicals that way and they would get it in the breast-milk, too. Even if a mother has cholera, the cholera doesn't go through the mother's milk, but POPs do go through the mother's milk. So, on the one hand, I wanted to encourage breast-feeding and discourage people from enriching the Nestle Corporation, but on the other hand, I knew the babies were being affected by the toxins.

There is plenty of research to suggest that POPs are released into the

environment by industrial processes, and by the spraying of pesticides, etc. These toxins are flowing through intercontinental airways. Do you know what that means? They're spreading all over the planet! Why don't we stop it? Because corporate profiteering is paramount; people don't seem to be able to live without exorbitant profits. So different groups need to come together to fight the corporations. No one group can do it alone.

**Joni Adamson:** You are not only involved in fighting on the global and regional level, but also on the local level. Could you speak briefly about your lawsuit against the City of Nogales, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the International Boundary and Water Commission?

**Teresa Leal:** Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, share a binational wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant is financed by both countries. It treats the water, the sewer, or runoff water on both sides; it treats and recharges it back into the Santa Cruz River. The problem is that over the last ten years the treatment facility has had very serious violations of treatment. In other words, not treating enough of the flow of the gray or residual waters. And it's pumping lots of raw sewage into the Santa Cruz River.

The EPA itself knows that the raw sewage is going into the river—their own data shows this—yet they have not acted on those violations, which is why I, and my partner in this suit, the Sierra Club, are suing the EPA. We are also suing the International Boundary and Water Commission because they are the ones that operate the plant. We are suing the city of Nogales, Arizona, because they have been informed of all these violations over the past ten years yet they have done nothing about it. So we're not suing them to do any miracles, we're suing them to do their job.

**Joni Adamson:** Over the past few decades, environmental justice activists have often had a very problematic relationship with mainstream environmentalist groups like the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, and Greenpeace. Do you see this lawsuit, and your partnership with the Sierra Club, as an example of how diverse groups can work together for common social and environmental goals?

**Teresa Leal:** Yes. The plaintiffs are the Sierra Club and me. People of color groups have had very serious problems with the Sierra Club in the past because they have often been at odds with our agendas. For example, in working to preserve natural landscapes, they often ignore or deny that some

people need to LIVE off the land, and depend for their survival on natural resources. That blind spot definitely does not set us up to be good neighbors. But in a world increasingly affected by globalism, we can not afford to work against each other. This lawsuit, in which the Sierra Club and I are working together for a common goal, puts us in a wholly different relation to each other than we have been in the past. We're coming from different perspectives and yet we are working toward a common goal.

**Joni Adamson:** You are also involved in projects on the local level that look more like those carried out by mainstream environmental groups. Can you speak briefly about your work for the Santa Cruz River.

**Teresa Leal:** The Santa Cruz River Project is an effort to create a coalition of people concerned for the health of the river. The reason I'm helping to organize this is because there are a lot of groups out there—each one working at different levels for different things. As a result, there is also a lot of in-fighting, a lot of people refusing to work with each other. I believe we can transcend that. I plan to propose a series of goals for the river. All these goals do not have to be assumed by any one group, but all of them are in agreement with those goals. We will each go and work on these goals as much as we can and then we can meet once in a while, and, hopefully, engage in the kind of training that will make us all more effective at reaching our goals.

For example, I would like the Friends of the Santa Cruz River group to offer to teach others how to do inventories or to do water testing, which is something that group has been doing very well for quite some time. Or as a group, we could ask the EPA to give us some funding to do some training on other skills that could help us in our fight for the river. To me, the most ambitious goal would be to take the river, sector by sector, and do an inventory of the aquatic life, the flora or the fauna, you know, the natural wildlife of the river so that we could create a holistic plan with the individual sectors classified, so that we can better understand what the river is about.

**Joni Adamson:** In 1988, you ran for mayor of Nogales. You lost that election but have been quoted as saying that you are going to continue to "throw rocks at the sun." What did you mean by that?

**Teresa Leal:** Well, when I ran for mayor, it was mostly so that there would be a candidate running opposite the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

candidate. The PRI has been the ruling party in Mexico for over eighty years. Opposing parties have to have their candidates. They have to have a historical background so that people in the future can say, yes, we recognize that party, they have existed, and people have voted for them before and will vote for them again. We needed a candidate that was well known here, somebody who could be shameless and talk about things in a political way. You know, to shake hands and say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you." I thought the race was going to be much easier; just go through the motions and say, "Democracy" at all the right times. But it was very hard because my campaign management crew convinced me that, to be successful, I had to talk about myself. I had to be able to say, "Please vote for ME because I'M the one who thinks and does, and I'VE done this in the past and I'M doing this now and I'M the mother of eight perfect kids." I just couldn't do it! But despite all of that, we did very well at the polls, and I think the campaign showed that democracy can work.

The democratic process never works fast enough but it is always in a process of evolution. So, you know, many of the things that we did in that election were just initial efforts, very open efforts to keep on throwing rocks at the sun. Throwing rocks at the sun is not bad, because, if you keep it up, sooner or later you will hit it! [laughter] We have to teach people, this is the way you throw rocks at the sun, despite the fact you know you're not always going to hit it, despite the fact you are not always going to win. If we were only stimulated by the sure shots, we would never get anywhere; we would be very behind. Change comes only when a few brave hearts dare to throw the first rock.

**T H E**  

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**E N V I R O N**  

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**M E N T A L**  

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**J U S T I C E**  

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**R E A D E R**

**POLITICS, POETICS, & PEDAGOGY**

edited by

**Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, & Rachel Stein**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PRESS TUCSON**



The University of Arizona Press  
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www.uapress.arizona.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The environmental justice reader : politics, poetics, and pedagogy /  
edited by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 13: 978-0-8165-2206-4 (cloth : acid-free paper)—ISBN 10: 0-8165-2206-5

ISBN 13: 978-0-8165-2207-1 (paper : acid-free paper)—ISBN 10: 0-8165-2207-3

1. Environmental justice. I. Adamson, Joni, 1958–

II. Evans, Mei Mei. III. Stein, Rachel.

GE220 .E585 2002

363.7—dc21

2002003308

Publication of this book is made possible in part by the proceeds of a permanent  
endowment created with the assistance of a Challenge Grant from the National  
Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency agency, and in part by a grant  
from the Provost's Author Support Fund of the University of Arizona.

Manufactured in the United States of America on acid-free, archival-quality paper.

15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

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