



# Margaret J. Wheatley

## **Bearing Witness**

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Bearing witness is hot.  
Everybody's doing it.

But  
the world  
that I  
witness  
is too much.

I can't bear it.  
I am too small.

I am rewarded with Frequent Flyer Miles  
if I donate to the Red Cross for hurricane relief.

In the N.Y. Times I look into the eyes of  
the starving in Sudan.  
My gaze shifts a fraction and I am staring at  
a 9000 dollar watch.

I am  
too small  
to bear  
so much,  
I shrink into the TV Screen,  
and let the images in.  
I want to bear witness,  
to be here.  
To witness.

And  
I begin  
to grow.  
I become  
large,  
voluminous,  
and suddenly  
I am cradling  
the world  
in my soul spaciousness.

I am a mother in Guatemala. The wind is raging,  
the waters are rising.  
I tie my child to the tallest tree.  
I say "We have lost everything. Please tell the others."

I am an old man at a tribunal in S. Africa.  
I raise my head from the table.  
I tell my story. People listen.  
I say "I know that today the nation cried my tears with me."

I am 12 years old in Kosovo. My  
family of 19 people is huddled in a basement.  
I say "They set the house on fire. They killed us  
as we ran for safety. They thought I was dead also."

I am standing in a field in Albania.  
I am in the mud. They tell me to get on a bus.  
I tell the reporter, "I do not want to go someplace else.  
I want to go home. That is where the love is.  
You must help us go home."

I am a monk walking slowly  
through the forest.  
I am awake. I know suffering. I know beauty.  
I know it is impermanent.  
And I bless it all with love.



**ABOUT MARGARET (MEG) WHEATLEY, Ed.D.**

*Margaret Wheatley writes, speaks, and teaches how we can accomplish our work, sustain our relationships, and willingly step forward to serve in this troubled time. She is co-founder and President emerita of The Berkana Institute, an organizational consultant since 1973, a global citizen since her youth, and a prolific writer. She has authored eight books. Her numerous articles may be downloaded free at her web site: [margaretwheatley.com](http://margaretwheatley.com). For more biographical information, see [margaretwheatley.com/bio](http://margaretwheatley.com/bio)*