

[On April 13, 2010, I listened to a radio broadcast of the third story recounted below and conceived this poem. Later the same day I heard an interview with Alice Walker about her new book, *Overcoming Speechlessness*. This verse is dedicated to Alice Walker--SB.]

## Today I Heard the News

Today I heard the news:  
Earthquake victims in Haiti  
victimized again  
by earthquake relief.  
    And there is nothing I can do  
    but write these words.

Today I heard the news:  
Dozens die, explosion,  
West Virginia mine.  
Hundreds of safety violations  
left uncorrected.  
    And there is nothing I can do  
    but offer you these lines.

Today I heard the news:  
Pakistani women defaced  
in acid attacks; husbands  
and in-laws face the minimum.  
    And I decide I will  
    compose a poem,

believing still  
that if each human being  
who hears the news  
(I mean, who really *hears*  
the news) provides us  
    with just a few words  
    or a few lines,

together we might compose the poem  
    which proves, at last:  
There *is something* we can do.

Steve Bloom  
April 2010