

SWEEPING, India

(written in Lodi gardens, Delhi, on 18th December 2008)

Everywhere in Delhi someone is sweeping
women and men with long fibre brooms sweep
pavements, walkways, paths and
beneath the trees or over the grass
with long twig besoms;
they clear the water-channels and allow
hoses to seep upon you silently like snakes;
indoors there are boys who continually swish to and fro
with long-handled mops across halls and corridors
along verandas.

Is life a path that must be swept
each day of each day's concerns
afflictions, ill-omens?
At first I thought it obsessive, but now
I see this leisurely brushing as
peaceful, rhythmical, tender, needful.
It prepares the way:
let me not sweep it aside.