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...I'm also obsessing about Kent State because it's only within the last couple of years that I've really let into my mind what happened...

*"What would you do if you found her dead on the ground?*

*How do you run when you know?"*

I think I did run at the time. I decided that the revolution I was seeking was actually a serious thing and I was not ready to die for it. Not until 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan did I re-discover my activist heart.

Jeff Miller asked me to dance in Junior High and for some reason I said No. Something dumb like he was too short.... or maybe I was scared and shy. I have no idea. I think I actually felt bad about it at the time. But I was an adolescent idiot like many of us. Don't remember speaking to him after that. I lived in a self-centered adolescent fog and didn't talk to most people— especially boys. And then years later I was away for my junior year in Paris trying to join the French student revolution and I saw his picture on the front page of the *Herald Tribune*. That picture was by the way from our high school yearbook which is why I immediately recognized it. One of our classmates who went to Kent actually showed a photo of what he really looked like at the the time-- a total long frizzy haired hippie who loved to party and hang out with friends... And said "No" to his friend who told him they should leave when the National Guard arrived armed on the scene.



"No, I need to stay with these people." (Direct quote)  
With all the frizzy hair he still had that same sweet yearbook smile.

Never stopped wishing I had danced with Jeff in Junior High. I'm thinking of writing a guidebook for the rest of my life and calling it "Dancing with Jeff."

Dancing with Jeff can stand for all the things that I didn't/don't do in life that I wish I had done.... Except... NOW I can change my mind and do them. Even if I'm scared. Even if I want to run. Every time I say "No" to something that my heart wants it's like saying no to dancing with Jeff. Every time I take the risk to follow my heart, I've given myself permission to dance ...with Jeff. I remember after I heard he had been killed I went to a park in Paris and watched some ducks on a pond. And I thought "Jeff will never be able to look at ducks on a pond again. So I'll have to do it for him."

Then I went off and continued my crazy life and only remembered a few years ago about the ducks and Jeff and giving up activism because I wasn't ready to die like he did. But now I can be a peaceful warrior for him. And maybe I'm a little more ready to die for it. But I'm not ready to do it perfectly or non-stop. I can still watch the ducks, and sing and party and all the other good stuff Jeff would probably be doing...



Paula Sharaga (Oct. 31, 1959 - Feb. 15, 2019)



Photo Courtesy of Harriet Jerusha Korim

*Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.  
Traveler, there is no path,  
you make the path as you walk.  
- Antonio Machado*

*[excerpt, letter from Paula Sharaga to Harriet Jerusha Korim]  
Paula Sharaga was a children's librarian, a peace and environmental justice activist and a dedicated cyclist who was killed when her bike was hit by a truck in the Fenway area of Boston on February 15, 2019.*