

## Rafael

In the tub we play games  
with the tugboat and the wind-up hippo.  
The water bounces in our close sea  
sliding onto the floor  
soaking the clothes thrown about.

“Mi hito, wash my back – please,” I say  
and he clambers over my legs  
exchanging places  
forgetting the soap  
as he scrubs so generously,  
tickling me with the loofa, laughing  
“Wash daddy’s back.”  
Then quietly, the water finally still,  
with no hands, he pees on me.



## I                      First Gear

I have to drop it into 1st, kick it  
into that meeting place  
of clutch and gear  
to climb your driveway,  
and struggle through the wiggly Spaniels,  
to see you  
in among the pillows, tired  
with straws in the 7-up.

## II A Plantation Legend

You're like a coffee bean  
brown  
warm-looking, and  
you used to be very round.  
Like java you're good to hold  
you warm up the insides  
whir and spark with energy.  
You're comforting like jo  
in the wee hours, and  
the cold before work.  
Like cappuccino you can be intellectual, but  
never snobby  
like a double espresso.  
You are a true bean, dear Sophie  
and if I could brew in your cup  
just a bit of my love  
it would fly through your insides  
and light up your lungs.



### Rachel at the Well

"Our Women squat on knotted calves,  
young  
the furrows over their eyes  
deep with nitrate and dust,  
squeezing out a few drops for their suckling,  
tender warriors  
as the pita bursts on the coals  
of the Beirut Hilton.

They still hear the last of the shouts, an  
erotic farewell of spent Uzi's and

wailing; but now the empty casings  
at the waterfront, like the dried sperm  
in the sands of Yemen  
or Syria, are rusting  
after the excess of the exodus,  
and the falafel ignites in their guts  
as their men dessicate under camouflage.

Hoist the jug to your heads, Oh Women  
swell and  
sway  
as you go to the well,  
where the tank commanders pass,  
to draw water."

