

*Stephanie Rioux*

## **Lively Dinner Guests #1 (A Sestina)**

Tonight we have invited Frida Kahlo for dinner.  
Our hair swings over our cheeks as we lay the fruits  
on the table. We are swathed in green velvet,  
humming like birds to ourselves, filling bowls with sweet noodles,  
feeling them like vines surround us as we breathe  
in the fumes from the pies in the oven.

My hands hold my belly warm as an oven  
which in its crevices cooks its own dinner.  
It weaves with electricity and blood and breath  
a cream so thick and sweet as fruits,  
and Frida's thick vines, slippery as noodles,  
lift it, dripping, to my mouth. Frida arrives in black velvet,

breaking up the dream, and our velvet  
humming coalesces to greet her with pies fresh from the oven.  
Her long black curls hang and swing like noodles  
upon her shoulders as she sits down for dinner.  
She holds out her palms in the candlelight, full of fruits.  
We each take one and our laughter breathes

out, fuses, adding odor to odor which we breathe  
in through our noses. The green and black velvet  
enclosing our bellies, our breasts, is a reflective bed for the light  
thrown from the fruit's  
bright colors. We begin to eat, warm as ovens,  
eyes as dark, we begin to eat our dinner,  
smiling quietly as the noodles

slink between our lips like snakes. “The noodles are like vines,” says Frida. Her breath is so close to our faces, and moves our dinner to levitate, as if cast on a sea of blue velvet. There is a buzz coming from the oven. It is the last pie, filled with hot fruits.

“My heart is a fruit,” says Frida, as she sucks in a noodle, “and my head is an oven. I know the closeness of my last breath. I am not scared. I feel the velvet against my body as in a coffin. This is my last dinner.”

Frida tells us as she scoops out the pie’s fruit, “This is my last breath.”  
 “At the funeral I will serve noodles,” I say. Blacker and blacker, her velvet dress becomes a gaseous oven, and we fold, inhaling the fumes, over dinner.

## **What It's Like Being A Girl And Living On Planet Earth.**

It is very nice to know the Earth is rotating.

Besides that,

I have very many nice toys,  
and I'm almost able to buy  
these very nice blue glass beads.

I live on the Earth.

I am all lost in the grass,  
a pepper-black bean left over  
from a kindergarten counting box,  
quite able to see  
how up there the green grass  
touches the sky.

When James looks into the sky  
he says he thinks  
it's very small.

Well but James has been to Jupiter.  
He flies around it eyes closed  
on his flying carpet,  
tossing heads of lettuce into  
Deeper Space,  
nut sauce in his ears.

I stay in the grass,  
eating dirty potato chips and waiting  
for big sneakers to come step on me.

Otherwise I chew pebbles,  
or tickle worms  
cos they don't know a goddamn  
about what's going on and will  
only think they have some  
awful itch they must  
cure cure cure.

I like to live in the grass.  
It's not bad I have religion.  
I make mosaics out of old gum  
and big-eye smiling icons  
out of dead sow bugs.  
I sit under the sprinklers  
and pray to god knows who.  
And I don't even care  
if the universe is expanding.  
I live on the Earth.  
I do not want to ride  
on a flying carpet,  
I eat my lettuce,  
and I do not make sauce  
out of nuts.  
I am lost in the very high grass, and  
It is very nice to know the Earth  
is rotating.