

# Grasshopper

*by* Dulce Maria Menendez

The grasshopper is perched  
upon the rim of a plate  
as I pluck various varieties  
of sunflowers; mammoth,  
and orange blood mexican  
dried up like a prickly cactus  
which pinch my fingers red.

Pluck, pluck they go onto  
the clicking sound. The  
grasshopper is oblivious  
or so it seems.

The plate was bought on stamps  
*abuela* received from her grocery bill,  
money she made selling Avon and  
babysitting.

She painstakingly licked one stamp  
at a time, one book at a time  
which was the equivalent of  
one plate or one soup bowl or  
one cafe con leche cup,  
or one saucer.

Weeks went by, months went by,  
years went by until she finally  
had her china cabinet filled  
with cheap rose and gold rim plates.

Neighbors walk by with their dogs.  
Women jog by hearing a song

in their earplugs. Children ride  
their bicycles back and forth.

Another neighbor is chipping away  
paint off the pillars of his front porch.

You are not home.

Yet the grasshopper doesn't budge.  
He understands the more seeds I throw  
into the plate, the more leverage.

It patiently waits and when  
one of the seeds comes close  
to his hind legs, he jumps.

Just like the grasshopper I wait.

