

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.

