

Breakfast Before The Bus Ride

Raquel Rodríguez

CLAP...CLAP...CLAP

Tortillas round and evenly pounded

In a rhythm

Before our school has arrived.

Each one hitting the comal

In an even stride, mom

Calling our names to each

Clap... *"Raquel, Patricia, Estela,*

Augustine, y los de mas

Deben de comer antes que se

Suben al bus."

Those mornings in winter full

Of tortilla smells from swollen air

Bubbles we popped for fun

To watch hot air rise.

Grabbing mantequilla the welfare lady

Supplied, trickling, trickling down the

Sides of our mouths and onto our hands.

Mother kept clapping, keeping her

Rhythm of names & tortillas in stride.

Lady with the Red Dress On

Raquel Rodríguez

Seventh grader picked to bring the tacos the
next day.

They get cold and greasy if they're not
warm; have your mother bring them to school, I'm sure
she has time.

GOD...could I meet her outside.

I could hide and not bring her inside
to Sally's, Timmy's and Mrs. Schaffers
raised eyebrows
blinking polite eyes
to my mother's red dress,
carefully ironed frayed pockets
at the sides.

Running to meet the lady outside with the
taco plate and faded red dress.

"Is that your mother?",

I didn't reply.

Hiding, watching the lady I loved
walking away...
outside.