



nine students  
nine kids  
on a roller coaster ride  
laughing and screaming  
unaware that

as the days speed by  
two of us will die  
demonstrators  
shot down  
by soldiers on rooftops  
in one of these very plazas

III

Now it's me behind the wheel  
driven by blind panic  
adrenaline pumping  
lungs constricting  
praying this chase to end  
to end  
to turn back the clock  
to be home with my baby

to be home

but I've lost my way  
lost my mind  
careening down this highway  
toward the brick wall  
the shot gun blast  
the billy club  
the accuser's finger

stop me

## womb/tomb

My daughter says,  
"Draw me a picture of your room  
Mommy."

What shall it be?

Glaring white enamel sink and toilet  
squat against cement block walls  
Do I live in a cellar bathroom?

Small, louvered windows  
constrict the light  
fracture my view  
fenced-in yard  
thin thread of highway on a  
distant hillside

But then  
there's the purple paisley bedspread  
apricot pink towel and washcloth  
green state shirts hung on the wall  
my watercolors  
blue skies  
rust red deserts  
endless turquoise seas  
a chaos of color  
rends the claustrophobic order

Shall I draw  
the books and books and books and books  
each a ride over the razor wire fence  
a friend whispering intimate secrets  
late into the night's solitary silence

Or my plants  
green limbed children  
I water each day  
till they preen their lushness  
hum their assurances  
I'm still a good mother

How do I draw  
my door  
    clanging open  
    clanging shut  
by an officer's hand and command  
or the bustle and clamor of  
fifty-nine neighbors  
                    I can never escape?

What do I draw for my daughter?  
a tomb

    or a womb?

### early Saturday morning

early Saturday morning  
    like a child  
    fleeing a nightmare  
I creep to your room  
    your bed  
    your arms

We lie  
    back to front  
                    two spoons  
me  
    tucked snugly  
    into the soft folds  
                    of your body

your heartbeat  
    a gentle metronome  
                    slows my breath  
takes the tension  
    of a long sleepless night  
    days holding tight to  
bitterness  
    rage

Your soft words  
    "It wasn't fair"  
                release my  
tears  
    rain  
        on parched fields.

Uncurling our bodies  
                we rise  
                        make coffee  
settle down to knit  
                leaning on plumped up pillows  
                        at opposite ends of the bed  
amiably  
    facing  
        each other

I peek at you:  
    concentrated,  
                counting stitches  
you look up  
    our eyes  
        meet  
love  
    swelling my heart  
        like a dandelion  
                cracks a city sidewalk  
blooms  
    into a smile  
        gentle  
    genuine  
for you