December 2006

English Rose

Lorna Van Gilst
Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol35/iss2/28
In Blanca’s spotless kitchen
on Tuesday afternoons
we sit and chew on language
Her table simply laid
white plastic tablecloth
a center jar of perfect deep-red blooms.

We put the words of English on our tongues—
short . . .tall
young . . .old
small . . .large . . .
and then we try
thin . . .thick—
So difficult to say—

Put your top teeth into the tongue and blow . . .
los dientes en la lengua . . .
thin . . . thick . . . think . . thirty . . three—
I speak deliberately—
But Blanca’s lovely rosebud mouth . . .
cannot form a sound so vile—
Tin . . . tic . . . tink . . . turty . . . tree . . .

We try again—once more I demonstrate—
but Blanca’s tongue
is tired of fricatives,
and it is time for me to go.

We close the books,
I pack my bag
bend down so slightly
for the cheek-brush farewell kiss

Then she selects one perfect deep-red rose—
“Tank you,” she says, handing it to me.
“Tank you for teaching me.”