

ALICIA OSTRIKER

Cinco de Mayo

What's that mob in the playground where I meant to sit
in sunshine read my book what's that uproar
P.S. 371 annual party a line for food
a dozen miniature soccer games around the pool no rules
backpacks of every hue parked on benches does nobody fear
theirs will be stolen? Are we really in the city or am I dreaming
three pretty mariachis singing "Cielito Lindo" and making
the children and their *mamacitas*, brown and beige,
sing along, everybody knows the words, indeed it is
New York City Upper West Side *Cinco de Mayo, querida*
they teach the children to dance "La cucaracha," kick and shake
and shriek, for it is Mexican Independence Day
let the city employee hugging clipboard shake her hair loose
and if two days ago I was shopping for ant traps
and if three days ago I was fighting rush hour traffic, let there be
traffic traffic in another world for here it is spring
if we are ants crazy ants as I sometimes think
see we are musical ants we are dancing ants