

Sonrisas

I live in a doorway
between two rooms. I hear
quiet clicks, cups of black
coffee, *click, click* like facts
budgets, tenure, curriculum,
from careful women in crisp beige
suits, quick beige smiles
that seldom sneak into their eyes.

I peek
in the other room señoras
in faded dresses stir sweet
milk coffee, laughter whirls
with steam from fresh *tamales*
*sh, sh, mucho ruido,**
they scold one another,
press their lips, trap smiles
in their dark, Mexican eyes.

--Pat Mora
From *Borders*, 1986.

* lots of noise