

Red Lip Stick Figures

Rushing, jittery, little girls skitter into the sanctuary
 relish the three hundred seconds of freedom,
 before the next thirty three hundred seconds of nightmarish
 imprisonment

Hurriedly enter the cramped, tiled refuge
 lined up like soldiers, packed in like sardines,
 anxious teenage souls await the next open stall

Giggly, gossipy, lemon-headed waif apply midday masks
 and groom beloved manes

Success-oriented scholars impatiently stand
 near grimy, white, porcelain oases, trimmed in rust

Red-lipped, strutting, hip-hop chicks tug at massive denim trousers,
 cuddle with Marlboros in the handicap cubicle

Sweet, young thins cackle and conform
 to the laws of this unfriendly land

Scowling, pierced rebels shove sweet, dainty sugar and spice aside
 to be first in the conga line

While alien life forms huddle around the overflowing trash can
 ponder life meaning and hair dyes

Pungent clouds of perfume, acrid human odors, and adolescent attitudes
 linger and coat sterile steel walls and precious, chipping mirrors
 hang heavy in the stuffy, oppressive air
 behind the door with the skirted stick figure

-Amy Vaerwewyck

slight of hand
 lashed inside
 being without the quintessential charms
 others have

just naked glimpses of a self
 and then joy in sorrow's truckbed
 but no one
 to share with

had some friends known it all
 maybe
 had they wanted to

-Kimberly Campanello