

## Women Without Nightgowns

Donna Ginn

Those who work all day, through the night,  
Sweating beneath sticky pleats,  
    circled and steamed and stripped of fight,  
without luxury of silk or softened sheets.

Those who walk for miles, stand for hours,  
scale stairs and stomp on cramps,  
    rubbing and wincing under the shower's  
pelting wetness, dim below hanging lamps.

Those who's safety pins make private  
all the skin that would be bare,  
    all the unseen openings, those  
portals that we purely share.

Those who know a murmur, whimpers  
of small voices in the dark, a last  
    recoil from deepest hurling tempers,  
restrained pain and tethered fast.

Women without nightgowns  
sleep in smothered little space,  
    in muffled noises, whispered frowns,  
and pause to find a starting place.

Those who count for number totals on

Hot line spread sheet and color-coded charts

Waiting on the next sheltering cot

Women without nightgowns.

Around the next corner.