

**Ellas**

**By Amanda Ellis**

She is a grandchild  
in a line full-of-women,  
a line of-full-women  
who fought to survive.

Soft black-brown strong  
women, whose voices so sweet  
betray the thick calloused roughness  
of their knotty work-worn hands.

Women, whose housedresses  
are doused with homemade starch,  
and plancha pressed into stiff flowery  
pearl snap buttoned up perfection.

Uniform flowery señora vatas of the kind  
she does not yet wear.  
Rebellion and stubbornness  
are the threads of her dress.

She hears their whispers echoing still:  
“Mi cielo, tienes que ser  
your own first love, tienes que ser faithful to yourself.  
This is how we survive, and this is the only way to be free.”