

Caffeine Queens

I The women's caucus coffee party:
consciousness-raised crossed legs,
limp tits like soggy teabags in
cast-off lovers' cardigans,
dull pencils compromising blank paper,
clots of fuzzy grey words itching
eardrums, steam and smoke sticking to
frosty windows like tufts of dust.

In all these women, little
unfertilized eggs disintegrate:
cracking, trickling, oozing, gurgling, ebbing
through snake-warped tubes and
blood-leavened tissues.
Synchronized Melitta coffee-makers,
leaving dark, heavy grounds in
white filter paper and always
dripping
dripping.

II Around the table,
their eyes are raw sirloin steaks
that their lovers speak condiments to
and eat at night.
And more than anything,
(equal wages, abortion, graduate school)
they want their men to feel the gravy,
the moist grind, thicken and perk
between their legs.
And even more than that,
they fear that the only mark they will leave on the world,
is the crusty yellow coffee stain
in stale satin panties.

— *Linda Svendsen*