

## THE NUMBERS

Black doe eyes  
Stare out under a mass of dark curls  
As small fingers fly  
Adding, subtracting  
Multiplying and dividing  
Scratching out answers  
That are always right  
Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco  
Seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez  
Thinking in Spanish  
Writing in English  
Translating it all  
Inside that brilliant head  
I tell him he could be  
a doctor, a scientist  
or a computer programmer  
and he says, "Doctor!"  
"That's what I want to be."  
And the numbers tell him  
He could be  
But later maybe they'll tell him  
He can't  
Maybe instead of a world leader  
He'll be an underachiever  
A dropout whose promise is never realized  
A boy who begins to believe the lie  
That he can't learn  
Or he doesn't need no education  
To survive on the mean streets  
Of this nation  
Of the haves and have nots  
Of the children we believe in  
And the ones we forgot  
But today he is slicing numbers  
With surgical precision  
With a heart full of promise  
And a distant vision  
Of the man in a white coat  
Holding a stethoscope  
Of the possibility of a life  
Planted with a seed of hope

