**ROOSTERS**By Milcha Sanchez-Scott
Hector

Papa? Ay, we’re better off without him. And he can’t see my rooster. It’s my bird. He can see it later. He would be proud of me? Ha! This is news. How would ne know, he hasn’t seen me in years. Yeah, mama, you brag about us in your letters to him. Well, what does he call me when he "brags" to his friend? Did he call me a winner? A champ? A prince? And did you tell him I was working the fields? Angela, he said nothing about you. Nothing, you\*re a girl and a retard. What possible use could he have for you? Grow up! You want me to give him a chance? What chance did he give us? Fighting his birds, in and out of trouble. He was never here for us, never a card, a little present for Angela. He forgot us. Just make it clear to him. Abuelo left the bird to me, not to him, to me. Yeah, I’ll be nice to him. As long as we all understand the "bird business," I\*ll be nice to him even if it kills me, Mother. I’m not feeling sorry for myself. Fine, I’ll eat. I\*ll eat now and feel sorry for myself later. I got nine minutes before I have to work.... I will now put on the same old smelly, filth-encrusted boots, I will walk to the fields. The scent of cow dung and rotting vegetation will fill the air. I will wait with the same group of beaten-down, pathetic men ... taking their last piss against a tree, dropping hard warm turds in the bushes. All adding to this fertile whore of a valley. At 7:30 that yellow mechanical grasshopper, the Deerfield tractor, will belch and move. At this exact moment, our foreman, John Knipe, will open his pig-sucking mouth, exposing his yellow, pointy, plaque-infested teeth. He yells, "Start picking, boys." The daily war begins ... the intimidation of violent growth ... the expanding melons and squashes, the hardiness of potatoes, the waxy purple succulence of eggplant, the potency of ripening tomatoes. All so smug, so rich, so ready to burst with sheer generosity and exuberance. They mock me ... I hear them ... "Hey Hector," they say, "show us whatcha got," and "Yo Hector we got bacteria out here more productive than you." ... I look to the ground. Slugs, snails, worms slithering in the earth with such ferocious hunger they devour their own tails, flies oozing out larvae, aphids, bees, gnats, caterpillars their prolification only slightly dampened by our sprays. We still find eggsacks hiding, ready to burst forth. Their teeming life, their lust, is shameful Well it\*s time ... Bye Ma. *(He exits.)*