

Children and lovers by ophelia alcantara- dimalanta, dreamweavers by marjorie m. ...

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Children And Lovers by Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta (1934-2010) children have a special knack for making you feel odd and nude suddenly even with that vaguest piece of smile you ready somewhere to cover a scorching shame when they wickedly naive and sportive barge in without ceremony and when you finally shut that errant door on them again to try resuming love you terminate it both ways instead it seems the look of bewilderment and hurt they leave behind you cannot annul henceforth an alienating chill scudding across your upright headboard flipped into stiffened sheets and consciences eighty and brittle with adult experiences and reconsidered passions confounding even the best intentions but even more final than all finalities fumbled for is the cool crisp “later” you wall them away with somewhere again love waiting suffers a little falling away you end up wishing lovers are more like gaming children and children less like gnarled impatient lovers.

Dreamweavers by Marjorie M. Evasco (b. 1953) We are entitled to our own definitions of the worlds we have in common: earthhouse(stay) waterwell(carry) firestove(tend) airsing(sigh) etherdream(die) and try out new combinations with key words unlocking power house on fire sing! stove under water stay, earth filled well die. The spells and spellings of our vocabularies are oracular in translation one woman in Pagnito-an another in Solentiname still another in Harxheim and many other women naming half the world together can move their earth musthouse their fire be water to their song will their dreamswell.

The Conversion by J. Neil C. Garcia (b. 1969) It happened in a metal drum. They put me there, my family that loved me. The water had been saved just for it, that day. The laundry lay caked and smelly. In the flower-shaped basins. Dishes soiled with fat and swill piled high in the sink, and grew flies. My cousins did not get washed that morning. Lost in masks of snot and dust, their faces looked tired and resigned to the dirty lot of children. All the neighbors gathered around our open-air bathroom. Wives peered out from the upper floor of their houses into our yard. Father had arrived booming with his cousins, my uncles. They were big, strong men, my uncles. They turned the house inside-out looking for me. Curled up in the deepest corner of my dead mother's cabinet, father found me.

He dragged me down the stairs by the hair into the waiting arms of my uncles. Because of modesty, I merely screamed and cried. Their hands, swollen and black with hair, bore me up in the air, and touched me. Into the cold of the drum I slipped, the tingling too much to bear at times my knees felt like they had turned into water. Waves swirled up and down around me, my head bobbing up and down. Father kept booming, Girl or Boy. I thought about it and squealed, Girl. Water curled under my nose. When I rose the same two words from father. The same girl kept sinking deeper, breathing deeper in the churning void. In the end I had to say what they all wanted me to say. I had to bring this diversion to its happy end, if only for the pot of rice left burning in the kitchen. I had to stop wearing my dead mother's clothes. In the mirror I watched the holes on my ears grow smaller, until they looked as if they had never heard of rhinestones, nor felt their glassy weight. I

should feel happy now that I'm redeemed. And I do. Father died within five years. I got my wife pregnant with the next. Our four children, all boys, are the joy of my manhood, my proof. Cousins who never shed their masks lay them for all their snot and grime. Another child is on the way. I have stopped caring what it will be. Water is still a problem and the drum is still there, deep and rusty. The bathroom has been roofed over with plastic. Scrubbed and clean, my wife knows I like things. She follows, though sometimes a pighead she is. It does not hurt to show her who is the man. A woman needs some talking sense into. If not, I hit her in the mouth to learn her. Every time, swill drips from her shredded lips. I drink with my uncles who all agree. They should because tonight I own their souls and the bottles they nuzzle like their prides. While they boom and boom flies whirr over their heads that grew them. Though nobody remembers, I sometimes think of the girl who drowned somewhere in a dream many dreams ago. I see her at night with bubbles springing like flowers from her nose. She is dying and before she sinks I try to touch her open face. But the water learns to heal itself and closes around her like a wound. I should feel sorry but I drown myself in gin before I can. Better off dead, I say to myself and my family that loves me for my bitter breath. We die to rise to a better life.