

# The Baby Catalogues

**G.C.  
WALDREP**

When the city gets in the way  
unexpectedly, all the actuaries and accountants  
start consulting the baby catalogues.  
Each is looking for his baby, or hers.

All the babies in the baby catalogues  
are dressed in the same gray uniforms.  
This, say the authorities,  
is to prevent sentimental misidentification.  
Across the city, deep in their offices,  
the actuaries and accountants  
wish they could remember  
just where or how they lost their babies.

They wish they could remember  
whether the babies they lost were boys  
or girls, what they were wearing  
or where they were at the time,

at the theater, or strolling through  
one of the larger municipal parks.  
In the photographs, the babies look  
content, vaguely knowing.

Outside, the city is experimenting  
with its new wardrobe,  
priming and preening before the enormous  
mirror the ocean makes.

It is difficult to see past the city  
when the city gets like this,  
no longer trying to sell you anything,  
no longer thinking of you at all.

# Elegy for Rosa Parks

**G.C.  
WALDREP**

Things have a logic  
of their own: museums,  
wars, breakfast specials.  
We think of these  
as little windows. When we  
look through them

we see children playing  
on a green lawn.  
We see other windows  
framing candles.  
We see buses, some half-  
full, others half-empty.

We build houses  
with entertainment centers  
and body-length  
mirrors, Formica counters  
and laminate floors.

Famous cities  
filled with the dead  
move on  
into lives we can't touch.  
After awhile,  
we learn not to look  
at fire so closely.

Things kneel and we  
step into them: a film  
clip, a photograph,  
a hand resting in moonlight.  
We adjust the equations.  
We trace names  
in the earth and the snow.