

QUIET VICTORIES

Today is a day that we celebrate—the quiet victories
of the women in the shop
for Mar and Bea
for young Sin Yee and Maria Ruiz
for Mrs. O'Malley—who walks with a cane
eking out a living in spite of the pain

This is the day we celebrate

For Lottie Brown and Ida Jones
came up from the South, got stuck at Cohen's

This is the day we celebrate

Today is the day we celebrate the tolerance of the women in
the shop, whose foremen are like drivers

ALWAYS

pushing too far, forcing the workers to demand pay which
never comes out equal to their rate—

This is the day we celebrate

This is the day we celebrate for the women who stood tall
in the face of the Boss/the day Bea was called "nigger" igniting
a fire which almost triggered a bloody riot.

And, had it not been for Maria Ruiz, explaining away in
her own language

*"Necesitamos unirnos. Nor iremos en huelga si el no se
excusa por su acto."*

It's unity we need. Let's call a strike unless he apologizes
for his act—

And Grace chimed in—
tall, graceful, Black
and painfully thin—saying

"We have nothing to lose, our dignity is at stake"—
Some more reasons for why we celebrate—