**Challenge of Judgment**

**By: Dorothy Thornton**

There is a girl within me

She is frail and timid and small, and she fears the word

*difference*. She blends in, masks her accent,

homogenizes with her surroundings.

There is a girl within me

She is scared of judging eyes, self-conscience of

the inflections of her voice, the food packed for her lunch,

and the jokes her ‘friends’ will claim aren’t at her expense.

There is a girl within me

She is ashamed of the embarrassment that creeps in

when her ‘mother-tongue’ taints the English of her mother

and she must assume the role of translator.

There is a girl within me

And she is frail and timid and small, and she fears the word

*Difference*.

But there are whispers of a woman

She welcomes the complement of *unique,*

she revels in the confidence that comes from a

‘Different perspective.’

Words that once mocked her with ridicule

Soak her with pride. For her mother’s

‘Imperfect’ English and ‘unfamiliar’ heritage

Shape the woman inside her

That tells her *difference* is an advantage,

*Unique* is a compliment,

And judgment is meant to be challenged