



Jane Duffy, *Sin Amor No Hay Nada, Chueca*, photograph, 2004

KRISTEN JONES

LITTLE GRACES

At the end of long, hard nights,
When we work in silent anti-social solitude—
The only time we can have no care for *clientes*—
When we are speedy and the fumes of the vats rise up
And the heat is all-oppressive, and wages war upon us,
And the clock ticks minutes past,
And the whole world is dark with dirt and night,
And our work is furious and hard, precise and chemical,

I will fill a glass with water
And take it back to the cooks—
To *el guapo*, Elpidio, *mi amor*, who will
Look up sharply, blink the sweat back from his eyes, his
Thick hands clenching the broom handle, and then
Clenching the glass—he will drink, grateful, and nod his
Assent of gratitude; and then to Martín, surrounded in a fog
Of dishwater and steam and the dregs of our night's work,
And he drains the cup with a slurp, as the drain swallows the garbage.
Más? I ask.
Sí, mucho más.
Regreso.
And I return.
And he drinks again.