

## SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

Solmaz Sharif

Studies suggest *How may I help you officer?* is the single most disarming thing to say and not *What's the problem?* Studies suggest it's best the help reply *My pleasure* and not *No problem*. Studies suggest it's best not to mention *problem* in front of power even to say there is none. Gloria Steinem says women lose power as they age and yet the loudest voice in my head is my mother. Studies show the mother we have in mind isn't the mother that exists. Mine says: *What the fuck are you crying for?* Studies show the baby monkey will pick the fake monkey with fake fur over the furless wire monkey with milk, without contest. Studies show to negate something is to think it anyway. *I'm not sad*. I'm not sad. Studies recommend regular expressions of gratitude and internal check-ins. Studies define assertiveness as self-respect cut with deference. *Enough*, the wire mother says. History is a kind of study. History says we forgave the executioner. Before we mopped the blood we asked: *Lord Judge, have I executed well?* Studies suggest yes. *What the fuck are you crying for, officer?* the wire mother teaches me to say, while America suggests Solmaz, *have you thanked your executioner today?*