

Delores Gauntlett

POCOMANIA



It could have been how Sister Barclay swung
her skirt and thrashed the tambourine
in the rapture of the unfinished day
quick-stepping under the spirit's influence,

or when Elder Shaw tiptoed
with the *Bible* in a stranglehold in one hand,
and the Psalm took root,
and the platform trembled under him;

or when he pried the crowd pacing pulpit and pew
and emerged with a string of hallelujas
and a swift balm, and willed them to be done
with the heartache and the blues.

But something else came over the make-do church
when the bareheaded girl knelt
and rolled in astonishment, and crawled her way
to God across the cold concrete,

and without apparent care coiled loose
from the heartbreak pounding in her head,
her soul stirred in the ecstasy of Pentecost.

Though what did I know at eight
about the bends they crossed
to that shelter from the storm?