

EILEEN CURTEIS

Dancing to New Rhythms, Lost Girls Find Their
Woman Souls Young Again

Pushed down,
fallen,
under the weight of a mountain
sometimes North American girls
born into North American families
don't make it.

Their mothers say,
"Now dear,
you have everything
a third world child doesn't—
food, clothes, toys, games, money,
bracelets, earrings, necklaces—
everything a third world child doesn't!"

"Yes, mommy,"
they say,
"cock-a-doodle-doo!"
and go to bed hungry
as a chewed up rooster.

You can't fool these girls!
They know
when a chocolate
turning over in its sleep
isn't real.
Insipid
as day-old phlegm
in the throat,
there is no substitute
for love
when it goes down
like a sugarless candy!

Were you to ask these girls,
"What is a heart?"
they would cry,
"a bell clanging
homesick
for its mother!"
Hankering for Love
they could be the best girls
in the world
blowing their lungs out
of a bugle
and still not be heard.

Driving uphill
into the new millennium
you may think there is no hope
for small girls on a scooter
grown big enough
to have the mouth of God in them
but look again.

Dancing
sure-footed
you'll not find them tiptoeing
around a naked tree
in winter.

As sure as God is
they'll come stomping
out of the kitchen
into a home
whose walls can no longer confine them.

A religious sister, teacher, and poet, Eileen Curteis has been involved in a healing ministry for the last six and a half years at Queenswood in Victoria, B.C. She is the author of Sojourner; Know Yourself; Moving On; and Wind Daughter.