

*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?

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