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EILEEN CURTEIS

The Wisdom Of Torn Skirts

Roots in my cellar
and more roots
enough to cover me
from the shame of living here
but I am not ashamed.

Fighting for life
I've gone down under the brambles
held love like a lily
seen terror
the poisoned blackberry
cut me up like a thorn
cut me down like a tree.

I've seen death on the highway
flown into her like a blind bird.
Driving down wrong roads
in search of the right shore
for a girl to walk on
I've crossed over the bridge
called ugly
to embrace the goodness in me.

My torn skirts
have aged me considerably.

The poem previously appeared in Grail.

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.

HEATHER DUFF

I Look In Your Library, Find Something By Susan Musgrave

I look in your library,
find something by Susan
Musgrave
assonance by candle
mildew and web

I wish on a Legion Hall
a place to eat blackberry
tarts
play Crazy Eights
for vets of the loony bin
sea witches and skinks

*Alders bend low
hush, my breath
in the stillborn forest*

I stare at your wall
at rust on machetes
bow and arrow
darts for a fir target
shiskebob skewer
pellet gun loaded for mice
World War I bayonet
with trough for running
blood

Next PMS
like library books
I will borrow your weapons
slay mental doctors
from my sordid past
dangle their heads
from birches that weep

*Alders bend low—
hush, my breath
in the stillborn forest*

Heather Duff's poetry has appeared in PRISM international, Textual Studies in Canada, Pottersfield Portfolio, Dandelion, Grain, and is forthcoming in both Descant and The Antigonish Review.