

# The Art Room

By Shara McCallum

for my sisters

Because we did not have threads  
of turquoise, silver, and gold,  
we could not sew a sun nor sky.  
And our hands became balls of fire.  
And our arms spread open like wings.

Because we had no chalk or pastels,  
no toad, forest, or morning-grass slats  
of paper, we had no colour  
for creatures. So we squatted  
and sprang, squatted and sprang.

Four young girls, plaits heavy  
on our backs, our feet were beating  
drums, drawing rhythms from the floor;  
our mouths became woodwinds;  
our tongues touched teeth and were reeds.

“The Art Room” is from the book *Song of Thieves*, by Shara McCallum, © 2003. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Song of Thieves* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003)