



## Drum Dream Girl

BY MARGARITA ENGLE

On an island of music  
in a city of drumbeats  
the drum dream girl  
dreamed

of pounding tall conga drums  
tapping small *bongó* drums  
and boom boom booming  
with long, loud sticks  
on big, round, silvery  
moon-bright *timbales*.

But everyone  
on the island of music  
in the city of drumbeats  
believed that only boys  
should play drums

so the drum dream girl  
had to keep dreaming  
quiet  
secret  
drumbeat  
dreams.

At outdoor cafés that looked like gardens  
she heard drums played by men  
but when she closed her eyes  
she could also hear  
her own imaginary  
music.

When she walked under  
wind-wavy palm trees  
in a flower-bright park  
she heard the whir of parrot wings  
the clack of woodpecker beaks  
the dancing tap  
of her own footsteps  
and the comforting pat  
of her own  
heartbeat.

At carnivals, she listened  
to the rattling beat  
of towering  
dancers  
on stilts

and the dragon clang  
of costumed drummers  
wearing huge masks.

At home, her fingertips  
rolled out their own  
dreamy drum rhythm  
on tables and chairs...

and even though everyone  
kept reminding her that girls  
on the island of music  
have never played drums

the brave drum dream girl  
dared to play  
tall conga drums  
small *bongó* drums  
and big, round, silvery  
moon-bright *timbales*.

Her hands seemed to fly  
as they rippled  
rapped

and pounded  
all the rhythms  
of her drum dreams.

Her big sisters were so excited  
that they invited her to join  
their new all-girl dance band

but their father said only boys  
should play drums.

So the drum dream girl  
had to keep dreaming  
and drumming  
alone

until finally  
her father offered  
to find a music teacher  
who could decide if her drums  
deserved  
to be heard.

The drum dream girl's  
teacher was amazed.  
The girl knew so much  
but he taught her more  
and more  
and more

and she practiced  
and she practiced  
and she practiced

until the teacher agreed  
that she was ready  
to play her small *bongó* drums  
outdoors at a starlit café  
that looked like a garden

where everyone who heard

her dream-bright music  
sang  
and danced  
and decided  
that girls should always  
be allowed to play  
drums

and both girls and boys  
should feel free  
to dream.

