

## **I Am Dying**

by M.C. Richards

Four children are singing "ring around the rosy" here where I am drinking my morning coffee with hot milk.

I was an English major in school --

so many famous lines about death:

"Death be not proud!"

Such a masculine presence --

part of our paternalistic culture -- and religion.

I relax into someone's arms. I feel a softness as of sleep, a gentleness that is friendly.

The children are riding their bicycles through my room, they do not see me or the walls.

I think of Eliot's Hollow Men "Is it like this," they ask

"In death's other kingdom -- walking alone when we are trembling with tenderness,

lips that would kiss, form prayers to broken stone."

Those lines brim with selfpity and accusation -

Like Thomas Hardy's "The terrible antilogy of making figments feel."

Oh no, now is not then.

I do not feel betrayed or bereft,

it's more like the Chattanooga Choo choo: the great traffic of evolution

and I am carrying my bit of being free of agenda -

open to a future

Ready to experiment, be creative, serve be beautiful, be real,

be nowhere

be no one I already know be birthing myself

waves and particles

backpacking in the hereafter.