

EDITH SPEERS

GIRL

Shake off the ribbons!
You're no frilly princess
with a synthetic simper
and perma-pressed curls to match.
Sly humour perches
in the curve of your mouth
and mocks the pastel platitudes
enforced by parents and brothers.

"Dress yourself up like a girl!"
they preach,
blinded by Barbie doll blandness
to freckles that dazzle like fireworks
and eyes clear as creek water.
Toss your head, little elf,
til those mum-imposed bows
slide off.

It's your party — lick the plate!
Scoop the cream with your finger!
Lady-like
means dead to delight.
Too soon they'll be saying
Drop that puzzle,
that plasticine phantasy,
that dream of the hero's life:
it's time to be mother and wife.