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EILEEN MYLES | 1949–

Joan

Today, May 30th, Joan
of Arc was burned.
She was 19 and
when she died
a man saw white doves
fly from her mouth.

Joan was born in 1512
between Lorraine
and Champagne. Joan
was raised on legends.
Merlin said France would be
lost by a woman and saved
by a virgin. Joan was
not an adventurous girl, not
a tomboy, but very dreamy,
good, stay-at-home,
the baby of the family.
Joan never got her period.

She heard these voices
in the bells, she saw angels
in colored glass. She believed
the sun moved around
the earth because that's
what she saw. She believed
God wanted Charles VII
to be King of France
because that's what Michael,
Catherine & Margaret told
her when she listened to
the bells. Her father
said he'd drown her
if she didn't stop this
nonsense.

She was 19 years old
when they burned her body in the middle of town
while she was still alive. A white dove
came out of her mouth as she died.
Four hundred and thirty-one years ago today.
A dove leaped right out of her mouth.