Tula "Books are door-shaped" By Margarita Engle

Books are door-shaped portals carrying me across oceans and centuries, helping me feel less alone.

But my mother believes
that girls who read too much
are unladylike
and ugly,
so my father's books are locked
in a clear glass cabinet. I gaze
at enticing covers
and mysterious titles,
but I am rarely permitted
to touch
the enchantment
of words.

Poems.

Stories.

Plays.

All are forbidden.

Girls are not supposed to think, but as soon as my eager mind begins to race, free thoughts rush in to replace the trapped ones.

I imagine distant times and faraway places.
Ghosts.
Vampires.
Ancient warriors.
Fantasy moves into the tangled maze of lonely confusion.

Secretly, I open an invisible book in my mind, and I step through its magical door-shape into a universe of dangerous villains and breathtaking heroes.

Many of the heroes are men and boys, but some are girls so tall strong and clever that they rescue other children from monsters.