I Am From

By Diana Weis

I am from a neighborhood scattered with forty-year-old trees.

Dropping leaves and helicopters used as squirt guns in childhood games.

The neighbors who planted them still watching the streetlights turn on at night.

Knowing just enough and sometimes too much about

The closed door across the street.

I am from the ever-prestigious Mt. We Is and the all-inclusive corner.

Meeting for late evening fun and all day Kool-Aid stands.

Summers filled with the capture of lightning bug and butterflies,

Neighborhood plays and talent shows given half rehearsed in the backyard.

I am from the middle green house on Ontario St.

Separating a family of three girls from a family of four boys.

Greeting each other with the secret neighborhood whistle

Flying kites in the big field, playing baseball in the little one

Constant action and noise, never lacking a playmate.

I am from a basement packed with more memories than it can hold

# Countless hours of playing and pretending

# Creating worlds that have long been forgotten

# Others tucked away waiting to be discovered again

Amid the storage that somehow got in the way.

I am from a ‘hoot’ with bartering skills that intimidate even the toughest used car salesman and a hollerer of “hand me that whatchamacallit, next to the thing-a-ma-jig and dohicky doodlely dads”

Dedicated to giving their children better than what they had

Yet not acknowledging the gifts they have in themselves to give

Demonstrating love through sacrifice and hard work instead of words.

I am from giant crayon circles drawn on the wall

Partners in crime my brother on one side, me on the other

Backseat foot battles on long car trips, “MOM! He’s on my side”

A forced relationship starting with yelling and black and blue marks from fists

Evolving into friendship, worldly travels and black and blue marks from foils.

I am from a Friday night routine of Dukes of Hazard and popcorn

Sent downstairs when Dallas came on

Reenacting the General Lee’s adventures

My brother Bo Duke, I was Daisy

Tommy Beller, the next door neighbor, always Boss Hog.

I am from Saturday night tradition of Church and Pizza

faithfully celebrated at Sortino’s

Children were greeted with a full sized Hershey’s bar

I chose the kind with almonds.

Eating hamburger pizza, their specialty

While mentally erasing the “Bud” and the “er” from the Budweiser sign to feel a kin.

I am from lazy Sunday mornings

Reading the comics and dancing the polka

Helping mom make pancakes on the griddle

Sneaking mouse-sized ones behind the fridge

Just in case.

I am from earlier Christmases marked with sugar cookies

Made from special holiday cookie cutters, the copper metal kind

With dented handles from pushing too hard

Homemade colored frosting waiting to be used.

From later Christmases filled with eight-hour pitch games

With meals scattered in between.

I am from the spirit of a young girl who likes birds,

Calming storms and eyes that proved the existence of smiles.

Always wanting her own adventures

Finding new beginnings instead.