

Always on Afternoons

Dolores McLaughlin

Always on afternoons, graham crackers and milk
at the kitchen table.
the windows are open
a spray of water from the sprinklers
a film of moisture on the window sills.

always the smell of freshly cut grass
on Friday afternoons.
no curtains at these windows
this alcove in the kitchen where we eat.
Nothing to hide any part of the yard from us.

The apple trees sit surrounded
by flagstone after flagstone.
It wasn't always like this.

Every spring the camera and ladder come out
and every year we sit each on a step
and have our picture taken.
Philip is so high that he has a hat of apple blossoms.
The bird bath is filled and robins and sparrows
dive in the out.
Water beads fall from their wings as they flap away.

NORTHRIDGE REVIEW

Croquet in the summer heat
knocking your ball against your opponent's out and away
little wire hoops stuck in the grass
tan balls with green, yellow blue and red stripes
being smacked by tan mallets
with green, yellow blue and red stripes.

Autumn and the wind blows
leaves skim across the yard
touching down tossed about landing in the corner
against the white wooden fence.

Every winter by brother Hugh putting out nuts
for the squirrels.
Dark dots against the snow
The bird bath filled with snow and
our stale bread.