

Poem in Your Pocket Day; April 29th, 2021

The Last Girl

In the summer dusk, we came out like fireflies,
the neighborhood children, swarming the best
backyards. At the Sedlacks', a long grassy span
for football. At the O'Briens', a forest of shrubs
for hide and seek. It felt like freedom, like a taste
of being adult, running those blocks in the almost
dark, at home in the space between homes.

All last spring, the next door neighbor's yard
was loud with backhoes and workers, building
a basketball court for the youngest. Her mother says
she wants to go pro. At maybe thirteen, she has
long straight hair and serious legs, almost never
smiles. She's out there every day, and always alone.

And I think. what if children running the streets
are like frogs or salmon? What if their disappearance
means we've wrecked the world past repair? What if
she — I don't know her name — becomes the last girl
left on earth who will play outside? At night, I hear
the shake and swing of metal basket chains.
Two points, then three. Two points, then three.



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