

I Don't Want to Go to the Bronx

by Carl Santoro

Katie stood at the end of the driveway, balancing herself in her red Keds on the bumpy Belgian blocks. She watched as her family piled into the four door Chevy. It was Sunday, 1956. They were going to the Bronx. She didn't want to go.

"C'mon, Katie, get in!" her brother Joe yelled from the back seat.

"I'm serious! I don't want to go!" she yelled back.

"Last offer!" her Dad said.

"Get in sweetie," Mom beckoned.

With all three heads staring at her, she lifted a leg and stamped it down hard. "NO!"

The car doors shut abruptly and the car sped off. Katie's face froze, staring in disbelief. They left? For real? They left me here? How could they?

She picked up a nearby stone and threw it at her brother's quickly disappearing face. She watched as the black car became the size of a raisin as it went down her long street. "What do I do now?" she thought. She bent down and began retying a misbehaving shoelace. "They didn't even leave me a piece of the cake they're bringing for dessert," she mumbled. Suddenly in front of her face, a huge tire rolled into view. They were back.

"Get in," her Dad shouted. She approached with feigned defeat and opened the back door to see Joe with the cake in his lap. He had the smirk of victory all over his face.

"Now what was that all about, honey? You know we go every Sunday to see Grandma," her mom said. Katie just couldn't or wouldn't want to speak her many thoughts about dying old people. She just stared into her lap.

Realizing they may now be running late, Dad picked up speed. Katie looked at Joe and whispered, "Open the lid, Joe, let's taste a little." They pried open the Tupperware and each of them stuck in one finger to sample the goods. Just then Katie felt a breeze on her bare legs. Her skirt literally moving. "Oh my gosh, I didn't shut the door all the way," she said. As her father rotated the large steering wheel, the car made a wide turn onto the entrance ramp. Katie already had her hand on the back door handle. She wanted to open it more to give it a good slam shut. The wide turn, the wind, and the strong centrifugal force swung the door out further and Katie with it, her hand still attached to the door handle. The cake flew off Joe's lap. Katie screamed. The cake smashed into her face. The family became hysterical. Katie was hanging on tightly, legs in the air, actually floating inches above the road as her father began to heed all the screaming and reduce speed.

The car slowed down as Katie used her free arm to grab the road and ease her descent. Joe was in hysterics laughing. "What were you doing?" her Mom screamed out. "Why did you open the door? You could've been killed!" Katie was too busy gathering her dress down and wiping her face to answer. "Are you hurt?" her Dad asked. The car fell silent for what seemed like an eternity.

"I want to see Grandma," she replied.

