

Poem: The Two Week Vacation

by Joanne Jagoda

The Two Week Vacation

The father, broad chested with muscled arms
sweats through his sleeveless undershirt,
curses in German under his breath
cramming suitcases into the old Plymouth,
for their two week family vacation.

The mother, a pony-tailed beauty, thinks she looks fat in her
new blue-checked pedal pushers and white blouse tied
under her full breasts— in the latest style.
The kids stay clear when she's in her "mood,"
slamming cupboards doing last minute stuff.

Never ready, when the father wants to *hit* the road,
they're not speaking, when he pulls out
into San Francisco fog, thick as a blanket.
At the toll booth, the kids skirmish
over who gets to hand the man the quarter.

The girl, twelve, frizzy haired, gangly and awkward
is yet to ripen and hates everything about herself.
The boy, sitting shotgun, ten, short and freckled—
whispers he hates his sister's guts.
She hisses he's stupid
and kicks his seat with her Keds.

The mother grimaces, her headache is starting up.
The boy fiddles with the radio;

the father yells, *turn it down for crying out loud.*
Johnny Mathis comes on, the father sings
to *Chances Are*, catches his wife's eye
through the rear view mirror and winks.
She ignores him.

The kids make loud farting noises.
When they reach Sonoma,
blessed sun breaks through the fog shroud.
The mother smiles.
The father exhales.

