

2023 Wind & Water Writing Contest  
Honourable Mention  
POETRY

Castlefield Avenue  
Summer, 1953

By Lorne Singer

*Castlefield Avenue*  
*Summer, 1953*

The water shimmers with late afternoon sun

Lou thinks to himself, he should get  
out the clippers, trim the dandelions  
that cluster amidst the tub's  
cast iron legs

The rest of the lawn is cut neat,  
up to the flowers, the fence

The two girls are in the tub,  
then gone, their high pitch  
shrieks disappearing like train  
whistles

Lou pictures an image, his being four,  
playing with pebbles in the dirt,  
his mother's calls, his laughter

He calls up memories like snapshots,  
the boat still, uniforms impatient,  
language rising up in bubbles

he wishes he could recall the words

The train ride, being deposited  
on the grey expanse by his uncle's  
hardware store, his suitcase

lost amidst brooms and hammers

The kitchen chair is rickety,  
his coffee cold. He strolls  
to the living room window

the girls, a constellation,  
skip rope, the car, rounded  
edges and shine, bulges  
with postcards and toolsets

Tomorrow is the drive to Niagara Falls  
There will be drinks, food, a familiar joke The  
car, god willing, will be light  
at midnight, even if he has gained

a pound, maybe two. His shirt  
tightens with the thought

The girls will stay. Up and down  
the street, packets of kids are delivered to  
addresses Except number 67, the Waxes,  
and number 38, the Levinsons

Windows are closed. The notes, black ink,  
read Quarantine, by order of Public Health  
Lou can feel the word typed there

Lou knows why he left Russia -  
the soldiers sweeping in, the fear

But what he remembers  
is the dirt, the stones, his  
brother's hand, a chicken calling,

laughter

What of his daughters?

There is August to navigate, the danger of  
crowded beaches, swimming pools, park  
benches, ball games, children like magnets

Lou suspects they will know the word  
polio He suspects they will remember  
the clawfoot tub, the water  
splashing, bathing suits like  
diamonds in the light

The sun, lowering, washes the car's hood,  
shines like an exclamation. Lou remembers  
the clippers need sharpening.

The dandelions can wait  
for another day