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## Allport Street

Marie Kandl  
*College of DuPage*

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## ALLPORT STREET

*Marie Kandl*

Our baseball diamond  
had a sewer cover  
in the center of the street  
as home plate.

Sometimes Fefe, the dwarf  
who lived down the block  
- we thought he was one of us  
until we grew taller -  
sometimes he was umpire,  
crunched on the curb,  
his arm around the lamppost.

Big Betty Kanka's breasts  
leaned out like a front porch.  
She carried cream puffs home from the bakery  
in a little white box  
tied with thin white string.

My mother baked rye bread and made noodles,  
golden wheels drying on newspapers  
spread across their double bed  
on Sunday mornings as we went to Mass.

We hunted grasshoppers with rubber guns  
in the bristly foxtail along the railroad tracks.

But mostly it was a desert  
of sidewalk and street  
without trees or lawns.

My oasis was up a flight  
of well-scrubbed wooden stairs,  
second floor, front  
at 1642.