



Fleeting Hours

I am from gravel and tar beneath my bike tires where boundaries were “as long as you can get there and back by supper”

Fenceless yards and dinner bells; ours, a Swiss cowbell, always last

Hand-me-downs, paper-bag book covers, Mom’s money-saving haircuts and the best birthday parties in the neighborhood

Hot Wheels, Creepy Crawlers, Easy-Bake Ovens and after-dinner games of Kick the Can

A crowded station wagon that crawled through three states to Grammy’s house in Hingham

I am from the warmth of an Irish-Catholic Mom with “None of my children are average” expectations

The encyclopedic knowledge of a Renaissance Dad who could discuss anything but WWII

The hubbub of six Reuter girls quieting down only for grace at the kitchen table and

The camaraderie of my second sisters who sweated and sang with me on fields, courts and tracks three seasons a year

I am from the magic of Christmas trees that arrived fully decorated while we slept, and a bottomless Halloween costume box

The enticing smells of warm French pancakes with butter and cinnamon on Sunday mornings and homemade pies just because

The rhythms of rock-paper-scissors, pop rocks, rock ’n roll, punk rock, and porch rockers

The instant gratification of painting houses, rebuilding soffits, and reshaping landscapes for a living

The naïve confidence of traveling for months with nothing but my backpack and \$20 a day

Too many mad dashes to the ferry, balancing bags on bikes, as best friends joined in Vineyard escapes from lives in schools

I am from a time before touch screens when talking on the phone and reading maps were valuable skills

When four 16-year-old girls could disappear into the Appalachian Trail for a long weekend with only the necessities on their backs and a plan to get picked up three days farther north
When college was affordable if you secured government loans and worked hard all summer



Now I am from summer reunions with four generations making drip castles, body surfing, and playing wiffle ball till dark at the Jersey Shore

The friendly competition of backyard Koob, Home-run Derby and Tee Club golf

Fleeting hours spent carving jack-o'-lanterns, building snow creatures, or feeding my plant addiction

A priceless partnership with Captain Peregrine, more than worth the wait and

Weekends in my husband's slice of White Mountain heaven where wooded trails lead to bald summits and "Great Sandwich Days"

– Melinda Reuter