

# A Few Words

from Jan Carroll

Summer 2023



## heat index

his fudgesicle melts from its icy form into  
a milkbrown pool on the saucer the stick loses

its clout as do the red letters capitalized  
on the screen which warn of the dangers

of heat when combined with humanity I mean  
humidity for now the wind throws great cold

drops of rain against the screen, sieves them  
as fine as worried beads of perspiration

across the radiator which today is a bleached  
dinosaur bone on display to slow distracted traffic

I wrote this when my sons were little—not sure which of  
them was neglecting his fudgesicle, a homemade one made  
with chocolate milk. I very clearly remember this hot day,  
when I lived up off of Birch Street.

I guess I am feeling a bit nostalgic lately,  
remembering other summers. May you too  
fondly recall good times from summers past  
and make wonderful new memories this year!

## Summer Visit

My father, aged, is effort and risks  
from the steadying influence  
of one chair to the next, to the counter,  
to the tap, to open the cupboard on the end  
full of prescriptions and peanut butter.

My mother stirring white  
mushrooms brown, turns to roll  
her eyes at the story of his baggage,  
miraculously, precariously, on top  
of the gondola, only because  
he waited, in contrast  
to the rushing, in contrast  
to the group.

I ran across this poem the other day.  
Both my parents have been gone for  
some time now. I wish I could drive  
down and visit with them, hear those  
stories told again, and enjoy my  
mom's reaction. She would make  
sloppy joes or have Dad grill some  
brats, either potato salad or potato  
chips on the side. Good summer  
memories.

## NEWS

Julie Majkowski and I are busy preparing a new event full of music and poetry to take place on Tuesday, October 24, 6:30 pm, at the Brewing Projekt.

I have a new blog post up on my website: [This Poem Not Written with Artificial Intelligence](#)

### Threnodies

I.  
your voice-notes still  
hang in stale air, still  
work their way in  
to my ear, still warp  
my defenses, metamorphose  
me (in my cocoon of excuses)  
into wet wings  
drying in the sun,  
holding still.

II.  
no one plays catch at all  
with me anymore—  
well they do, but they don't  
have your curveball.

III.  
you used to take  
lots of light captive,  
coerce it to make  
things seem radioactive  
but safe  
to the touch,  
always asking way  
too much.

IV.  
no one trumpets around in jazz fusion  
to amuse me anymore—  
well they do, but they don't  
have your improvisation...

V.  
your voiced notes still hang  
in stale air, some work  
their way  
into my breathing,  
if I move  
I displace them  
so I'm still  
not wanting  
to erase  
your say.



My most recent book,  
*Self-Portrait in Scraps of Paper*, is available [here](#).  
To read a review of it, go [here](#).