

JANINE CERTO

**Childhood Friends**

“Remember when we planned to live together?” We’d be Laverne & Shirley skipping an American street, arm in arm, reciting a Yiddish hopscotch chant.

Our childhoods still hum in the static of a transistor radio & the watery memory of my parents’ above-ground pool, each of us on different rafts, drawing the handles

tight to make one float, the long length of our legs touching, our form spinning in & out of shade, lifting our bikinis to view our tan lines, our mothers weeding the hill —

bent like pitched tents. The bells of St. Michael’s Church & the ice cream truck caroled as we drifted — a small continent under an atmosphere busy with clouds, wondering where all

the planes were going, never getting the words right to Pink Floyd’s *Another Brick in the Wall*. “Let’s get together next year,” is a grief that pools in my chest like a steady low frequency, like the low

notes of a ballad, because I’m still not sure how it happens, who gets tired or who changes directions first, but I remember the release, seeing you float to the other side,

each of us reaching one arm under the sun as if all we believed was at stake, one arm outstretched as a last impossible chance before we sang goodbye.

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