



1987

Neighborhood

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NEIGHBORHOOD

- I. Italians
They lived all around us
St. Louis had a place called "The Hill," that was
where most of them lived in "pasta harmony"
- II. The Testas were our closest Italian neighbors
Always yelling and swelling in Italian
Mary Margaret and Angelo were both roly-poly, black-haired type
With lots of kids, of course
Having dinner at their house was li' eating in Italy
A lasagna smell was always there
- III. Dad and I, when fall finally came, would walk up to the
front of the neighborhood and get the newly ripened persimmons
Bright orange with a little tint of yellow, textured like plums
Dad always got the ripe ones, mine made me screw up my face in
sourness
- IV. Three giant stately willow trees dominated our back yard
We had rope swings hanging from the splintered deck
And the vegetable garden was my Dad's prized agriculture
- V. The neighbor's dog, a Lassie type, used to come over and do his
job in our yard all the time
One day Dad gathered it all up, and threw it on the side of their
cream house
I bet they always wondered how dog-crap got there
This same dog attacked our lawnmower one day
He lost
- VI. Heather and I made tacos from nature
Leaves were lettuce, rose petals were tomatoes,
dirt was the meat, and dead leaves were the taco shell,
"the green leaves were the lettuce"
- VII. I was stirring up memories in my mother's mind
Her best friend, Mrs. Jean Belt, got drunk on tequila one night
at some party
She happened to live at the top of a hill
The party was at the bottom
She crawled up the hill to get home
I guess I was too young to understand
- VIII. What a neighborhood
I still didn't mention the murderer in the park

Kerry Kitchens