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Sunday Drives in the Forties

by Fredrick Zydek

The things of money were still
in those days. Taverns closed
at midnight. Main Street was barren
as a room full of old nuns—
not even gas stations opened.

No one had heard of shopping malls.
When we took a Sunday drive,
it was for the drive itself.
The clan would climb into the Model A
knowing it was the journey,

not the destination that mattered.
Mother would pack a lunch,
and we'd drive to the lake
or the big maple along Spiketon Creek
where we would munch and wade

and take long naps in the sun.
Maybe we'd drive to Grandma's house
and listen to tales of the old country
or crank up the Victrola for Grandpa
and watch him smoke his long cigars.

Those were the days of croquet
on the lawn, pitching horseshoes,
playing marbles in a circle scratched
in the dirt out behind the barn,
and catching crawfish in the ditch

that ran along the dirt road
to my grandparents' farm. Sometimes,
if it rained we would simply drive
to the woods and eat our sandwiches,
hoping to see a deer. It was enough.

