

and new teams were chosen. There were times when the girls would forsake baseball for skipping or hopscotch, but in the end they would always go back to the baseball diamond. In the fall we played soccer. In the winter we played fox and rabbits, skated on the rink we made, and had snowball fights.

Although we had periodic diversions in our school life, there was a very special time that we were treated to each school day. For one-half hour after lunch the teacher would read us a chapter from a novel... It was magic! In our imaginations we travelled throughout the world. We rode camels, horses, trains, and ships. We fought off bears, Indians, and evil sorcerers. We climbed mountains, hunted tigers, and discovered gold mines. For that brief time we were carried into a different world in which we could go anywhere and be anyone. All the history and geography facts crammed into our heads could never make places and people as alive and meaningful as the stories our teacher read to us. Perhaps the most important thing we gained from this special time was the ability to dream.

After this kind of excitement, the rest of the afternoon was always anti-climactic. We usually plodded through this part of the day. Sometimes, the teacher would enliven it with a spelling bee or another game that might involve history, geography, or mathematics. By the time 4:00 p.m. arrived, both the students and the teacher were anxious to complete the final ritual of the day. Just as we started the day standing at attention beside our desk, so we ended it. After the teacher struck a chord on the piano, we sang "God Save the Queen." The class was dismissed and the children raced to the cloakroom to retrieve their belongings and then charged out the door to return to their homes.

Memories are triggered at odd times by unpredictable and predictable occurrences. Last week my neighbour returned from her annual winter holiday. Today I call my neighbour Georgina.