

# Poem: Ice Cream

*Eric Edwards*

Always on my birthday,  
in mid-July's gold sun,  
it never rained;  
we were barefooted  
and t-shirted,  
shorthaired and wild,  
  
and we made our own ice cream.

Only now, coming into  
this summer-warm childhood  
from a great distance  
do I see my parents  
standing against a blue sky  
full of ocean air –  
how they watched us  
while leaving us alone

having made the plans  
that would bring my friends  
shy and laughing –

we were all the same,  
we bore gifts for each other  
that we chose and our parents bought,  
not knowing how to feel  
but coming to understand celebration  
enough, barely enough  
to enjoy giving and receiving

to enjoy making ice cream.



Some parent drove  
the one minute  
to the old ice house  
still busy in the fifties  
set downslope between the road  
and Miles Pond.

Details! solid, invisible facts  
that ran like the breeze  
through our hair –

we looked into the cool  
dark wood of it and watched  
as some old man brought out  
with tongs hung from one hand,  
a twenty-five pound square of ice.

I have trouble remembering  
the ice house, the people, the cars;  
it was the ice that mattered,  
and the instruments to carry it,  
the cardboard to put it on,  
ice picks to pick it apart,  
slivers of ice for the mouth,  
rock salt for the ice,  
and a little salt for the mouth...

We never thought about it,  
how it all hangs together,  
pond, salt, and ice,  
how we carry memory  
like twenty-five pounds of ice,  
how we made ice cream out of that day –

Only now do I recall  
the hay where the ice slept,  
the cold air swirling from the wooden doors,  
that it was unusual,  
a house for ice.



How the memory splinters  
as we use it  
taste it again and again  
I can see right through it  
until I drive the pick in...

We packed ice in the wooden bucket  
around the steep cylinder  
around the cream and fruit sugar;

the crank was fitted on top  
and we took turns cranking  
in an odd challenging way

learning or unlearning competition  
and desire, hunger and preparation;

my mother laughed outright  
we were so resolute and callow.

We had to sweat to make it cold.

Eric Edwards is a Woods Hole poet



*Drawings by Julia S. Child*