

WE WERE IN A MOVIE

TONI SCORSESE

I don't recall the year, but it was summer in the 1970s,
Pitchpine Place – new homes; dry, sparsely manicured lawns.
The man across the street was a grad student;
for some reason I don't think it was film school.

We were tender young; 7 maybe, so the twins were 5.
I'm placing based on Mom and Dad's hair.
Hers slick and kissing her tush like Cher's.
His, the early comb-over he'd wear until 1989.
They were just kids – no gray yet – barely 30.
I used to pretend they were Doug and Emmy Jo.

The man selected us to star in his master's project.
Because we were Scorseses? No actors among us though.
Some of the neighbor children were featured in the opening credits:
a crayon poster – *The Apple's Core*.
I wonder if the symbolism was lost on me at the time.
Shit, the only celluloid copy available has long disappeared;
mere snippets of silent 8mm remain in my mind.

We played typical Suburbanites in cookie-cutter Levitt homes;
the American-Dream husband and housewife – raising us three.
There was another woman – the man's cousin? Sister? I don't know.

Dad drank scotch rocks on the amber and chocolate patio
contemplating his ennui and that other woman.
The twins and I, directed to annoy him, played ring around the Daddy,
incessantly chanting, "The sun is out, the sun is out!"
Was that a thing we used to do or part of the man's script? Dunno.
Mommy wasn't in that footage – later she appeared – the jilted wife.

Was there a beach scene? The implied affair? She had long hair too.
We ran after Daddy to bring him home to the family.
Mom drove us to a bench in front of the cemetery on Rte. 112.
I think it was the gold car, Frank; the one with blades of grass sprouting in the back.

The twins and I were there to manipulate Daddy's return:
bottom lips jutting, puppy dog eyes, wee hands waving him toward us.
Ooph – contrived performance that, and Mommy's head hung low.
He wore a long, wool coat; I think a hat too – implying he was far from home – and SANDALS!
Mom used to joke at the spectacle of that – wool and sandals in the summer.
Mommy and Daddy embraced, he got into the car, and came back home.

Summer on Long Island, 1970s – we were in a movie.

4/5/2023
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