

Stoops

Not smooth surfaced ones like brownstones in better neighborhoods, but blond and rough-textured, with stones embedded. I could run my finger over a stone, the surface smooth, but only an instant before the ripping texture of concrete, ragged and sharp. Crisp angles perfect for the pink Spaldene to bounce back, high edge shot like a home run, kids cheering run! run! run! Or wooden stoops like bunk beds we'd lie down on when we were tired. Kids. Brooklyn. We'd jump off, climbing one step higher each time, until from the top step you could feel it in your spine. It might make the back of your head hurt. Where were our parents? I can't remember a parent ever to say stop. We jumped handrails to slate or concrete sidewalk on dares. We catapulted cast-iron spear-picket fences. We shinned up lampposts and hung off the top over traffic. Summers we ran the streets morning to dark, climbing barbed wire, crossing alleys, crawling through any opening. Only at night the mothers' voices like solitary bird calls, your name singing along the darkening streets.