Summer of 1973

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You could hear them coming
before they arrived.
Burrowing underground
like brigades or bunions
they battled their bodies
into 17-year bliss,
and one summer we found them,
the locusts, invading our home,
our driveway, our sanity.

My brother dissected them alive.
We watched them float on the pool,
ooze and burn on the grill, crack
like popcorn, then spin and hiss.
I walked home from the pool
all the way on my heels
to avoid stepping and crunching
their dark shadows.

We would eat bowls of
butter pecan in our basement,
watching the Brady Bunch,
and a cicada would crawl
next to us--beady little eyes--
it slipped through our damp stone walls.

It was part of life we would
easily want to forget--
like 45 records, 8-track cassettes,
long hair and wavy shirts.