

Original

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At the Shopping Center

A park where children used to play is gone,
and in its place now stands a shopping mall,
a modern blend of concrete, glass, and steel
with anything and everything for sale.

Where once the boys could practice half-court jump shots
and watch the ball clang off the netless rim,
is now a store that sells the best in backboards
and basketballs of highest quality.

Where once the girls, with just a rope or stone,
could jump or hop and play into the night,
is now a room where each game costs a quarter
and ends when the machine proclaims its kill.

Where once the lovers sat on wooden benches
and spoke no words that kisses couldn't say,
is now a place where on display are boxed cards
with poems of love written by hired pens.

So business booms and people come and go
to shop for what they do or do not need,
but few recall a park plowed underground,
where all the best commodities were free.