Soap Box Derby Queen

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Soap Box Derby Queen

I was Soap Box Derby Queen 1971 in a silver pipe cleaner crown, captive grand marshal leading the boys’ procession of pine boxes.

They shoehorned me into a striped go-cart, strapped me down with a paper sash that read, “QUEEN.” I knew nothing of axles, of inertia, of wanting to win; I was 4 years old, a braided brunette coached to use one hand for holding my crown in place, the other for gripping splintery pine as I careened down McCowans Ferry at 30 miles an hour in a race against no one. At the foot of the hill, a stir of wind-chapped hands managed quiet applause to congratulate the Queen, not for speed but for arriving, sash and tiara intact.