

We sprawled out on her parent's bed because they had a window air conditioner, and watched American Bandstand on their portable TV. Then Maureen fell asleep, Mimi read *Seventeen* magazine, and I started *Valley of the Dolls*, which Wilma let me take home because she was done with it. I didn't really like the way it made me feel, but I kept reading it anyway.

At five o'clock, we pooled our money and had a pizza delivered. We dipped our slices into Wishbone Italian dressing, and afterwards Maureen offered us a Winston.

"Want to try a menthol?" I asked them. "I took two of my mom's Salems."

The pizza must have put Mimi in an even better mood, because she did a taste test of each cigarette. After a couple of sputtering coughs, she said, "I guess if I had to pick, it would be the menthol, but really, I don't get smoking at all. I wish my parents would both quit."

Maureen shrugged and lit a new one with her old one. "We need some music, you guys," she said. "Let's play something on my parent's stereo. Any suggestions? Most of my records are upstairs, but that pile on the piano are mine too."

"You pick, Mimi," I said.

She flipped through the pile without much expression, and then broke out with a grin.

"Let's see," Maureen said.

Mimi held up the Monkees

"I might have known," Maureen said. "Okay, Ruth Ann, you told her to pick. So here we go."

"All right, one song. And how about we vote on which one?"

It was unanimous, so we cranked up, "(I'm Not) Your Stepping Stone" and we all sang it so loud I'm pretty sure Terry O'Malley could hear us next door.