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Arnold Evans

Sandra Soli

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fingering the brads along the two brass bands that encircled the trunk, and finally very timidly said, "I like this one best."

When Daddy finished writing the check for fourteen dollars ninety-eight cents, the owner thanked him and handed me a small brown envelope. I felt doubly blessed when I discovered it contained a shiney key. I had a brand new trunk with a key all my own!

Over the years, that little trunk afforded me much pleasure. At home, I found the perfect niche for it in a

corner of the screened-in back porch.

I spent many happy hours storing my little treasures in the top tray--love letters from my first sweetheart kept in a special place to be brought out from time to time to be reread.

In more prosperous times, I made many trips on the train. I was always proud to point out my trunk on the platform as the one without the *ropes*.

One day as I stood outside the depot waiting to board the train, I noticed two men pacing the platform. They stopped at the huge pile of luggage that

would be placed in the baggage car. My little trunk seemed to pique their interest, so I edged closer within hearing distance. Suddenly one of them kicked my trunk and said to his companion, "If I didn't have any more clothes than *that*, I'd stay home!" Tears welled up in my eyes as I thought to myself, "If that stranger only knew the true story behind that little trunk!"

Maybe we're better off not to know the secrets below our associates' lids--as the man who kicked my trunk had no way of knowing me. ●

sorrowful soul-searching

Arnold Evans

By Sandra Soli

Remembering
the curl of wallpaper at the edge of the kitchen casement,
aware of October settling in the crescent of his thighs,
Arnold Evans sits in a front pew, staring beyond the
bayberry-scented altar, through the tidy composure of
his wife's hair. Arranged just so, no strand escaping.
There would be no place to go.

He does not hear the hymn,
nor the visiting sets of relations mouthing faith and angels,
giving thanks it is not their turn today. He thinks only of
wallpaper, acknowledges only his fifty-four years, achieved
in spite of himself, in spite of her, who complained
of such things. No matter. He need not think of it again,
this year or next.

But he wishes he had repaired at least
the place by the window. Her eyes would have thanked him.
Inside the church, the smell of history, the opalescence
of her skin. He had almost forgotten the glow of it.
Better

to think of sausages and cabbage ready at home, with the pint
chilled to accompany them. Willing to stay the hour,
but knowing it is overlong, this service for the dead.