

Everything but the Kitchen Sink

by angel readman

It starts with a letter, down the back of the couch, ending, *'love, always.* 'I read only the kisses aimed at me - a firing line running off the page.

How long has that letter hidden there? It secreted itself in a corner of the house when I wasn't looking. It curled up in the dark, waiting to sneak up.

With one accidental find, I'm aware of the whole house, nooks like forgotten hands. Lost ties and socks thread through rooms in arteries of memory.

I pull out chairs, sweep dust bunnies before they become wolves. I clear shelves of birthday books, Christmas Russian dolls nesting inside one another, like former selves. The photo's of my father have to go, carsd from my mother. The shed skin of past lovers, is everywhere; I feel each one, breathing, from the snouts of old Valentine's bears.

I ransack alcoves with sacks, strong enough to dispose of severed body parts. I unearth cupboards, drawers, the underbelly of the bed. I strip sheets, grasp teapots, eggcups, photo albums. The sofa grinds out the door with a push as the house gives birth.

Outside, I make a living room for the birds. I lie everything on the pavement, write a sign:

'FREE TO GOOD HOME.'

I stand in my nightdress and wait. People come. Some look at the woman in bare feet and walk on. Others, entwined couples, father's tugged along by children, stop. Something brightly coloured catches their eye. They pick through to the bones for something to take home and show me their lives in what they take. I hope they will use them,

I hope they will give them memories. I look at the sky, dusk on the almost empty path, the house closing its eyes, as I walk inside.

