

Three Flash Sonnets

by Dianne McKnight-Warren

Family Furniture

My German friend inherited a Black Forest ensemble when her grandmother died: a table, a chair, and that nagging cuckoo clock. Like she needs reminding.

My husband says we're getting the Chippendale secretary in his mother's hallway. He says he heard it's worth some money. I'm wondering how it will look with the beer cans.

My mother wants to give me a few things: her plastic electric piano that only played a few of the notes she needed and her old Singer sewing machine. When I was little I would sit at that machine for hours making tiny bags that were useless because they had no way of closing. She always promised she'd show me how to make a place for a drawstring at the top.

And she wants to give me her cedar chest. My father bought it for her in the fifties. The chest is cracked almost in two, rotten from years of sitting in storage. I remember her telling me I could have it if I wanted it, but she said I might not, it being so broken and all.

Shakespeare Reversed

I remember once at a gas station my dad asked for seven cents worth of gas. We needed the gas to pick up a pizza we knew would cost \$1.78. We had exactly \$1.85 so my dad had to give the guy a dime and ask for three cents back. I remember my dad laughed a little and said something about it being odd. I don't remember his exact words.

I don't remember whether or not the guy was nice. I don't remember looking at him, but I was probably watching, maybe turned around in my seat and hiding my face behind my arms, my

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nose burrowed into the bend of an elbow.

Sometimes now I see kids sitting like that in cars in parking lots of warehouse grocery stores and Wal-Mart's. They want to see but not be seen. They want to vanish into that "airy nothing," lose the place and the name.

Poor souls. Likely they'll be poets.

Pounds of Flesh

His apartment was exactly what you'd expect of a hopelessly procrastinating graduate student, messy to perfection. She'd been one herself—with four incompletes at one time, so many the chair of the department had called her in to discuss them. All four involved papers she had to write. She remembered one paper on *The Merchant of Venice*, an existential examination of Antonio, the title character. She'd used a line from the final scene for the title, something about ships coming safely to road. She ended up sleeping with the professor, but the connection between sex and the metaphor hadn't occurred to her at the time. Of course she saw it clearly now.

She'd gotten an A+. The professor must have seen it then.

