Occasional sunshine

by Sandra Davies

‘Didn't you used to have a daughter?'

The tense and phraseology jarred, but he was inarticulate not ignorant, awkward rather than unaware of how it sounded and she smiled at him.

And as she smiled she thought about the speed with which one assimilates impressions, with which one judges. She had never, to her knowledge seen this man before, despite him obviously living only round the corner, standing on the drive before his house. And he was not conventional, would not have been invisible. Tall, well over six foot, but a bendy, willowy uncertain tall, brown one-year sapling rather than slow growing sturdy branch, the tree metaphor extended by the catkins of his light brown dreadlocks, loose and shot with streaks of blondness denoting, she thought fancifully, the several summers he had lived through since he first grew them.

‘I still have.' She smiled again, ‘but she no longer lives at home.'

And he nodded, silent, calm, unsmiling, acknowledging confirmation rather than conventionally implying ‘Oh that's nice.' Instead he said ‘I'm still at home' by which he indicated failure of a sort, and yes, he seemed the sort that failed, gentle, unconventional, quite sweet.

And when asked, her daughter confirmed this and dismissed him, not unkindly but with little thought, ‘Oh,' she said, ‘that'll be Adam, he was a couple of years ahead of me.' And that was all.

And that was all it stayed for perhaps another four, five years until one day, while waving off her daughter, visiting and evidently well

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/sandra-davies/occasional-sunshine»*
Copyright © 2011 Sandra Davies. All rights reserved.

flown, long grown, smart suit and statement car, she saw him once again, returning from the river, still willowy and gentle, smile still sweet. She loitered in the sunshine and he said ‘I almost didn't recognise her.' And she knew just what he meant, for sometimes nor did she.