

The Pastel Scarf

She saved her money,
pin money, pocket money,
they called it,
now, what I'd call spare change,
pennies, nickels, and dimes,
quarters and the occasional
one dollar bill,
all saved over a long gray Winter,
stashed in that old candy tin,
waiting patiently
to purchase a small luxury
to welcome Spring;
something bright
to wear for Easter,
something worth every penny.

She found it, the perfect scarf,
at Meyer & Franks ladies' counter,
swirling softly
among the crisp white gloves
and thick leather handbags,
its raggedly abstract pastel colors
dancing on the translucent white silk
looked to her like flowers and butterflies,
and the drifting ends made her smile
as she whirled it around her crown
of strawberry hair;
it was worth every penny.

She gave it to her grownup daughter,
on a warm Summer birthday,
a hand-me-down gift,
a remembrance of child's play ~
when her daughter traipsed about the house
trailing the silken scarf,
playing dress up ~
the scarf now a little worn,
now a little faded,
its translucent white now a bit gray
with age, like her hair,
and the brightly colored pastels
like flowers and butterflies
now a little softer,
yet her treasured old scarf
still made her smile,
and a tear fell when she saw
her grownup daughter's eyes light up

as she lifted the silky folds from the tissue
with joy of remembering
those childhood moments so clear,
this scarf so cherished;
it was worth every penny.

It lies now across a child's pillow,
the drifting ends
spreading and flowing gently,
wrapping around her small head
as she sleeps,
her breath a little ragged,
like the abstract pastel colors
that still looked like flowers and butterflies
dancing upon the translucent white silk
like her skin, tinged
with the grayness
of illness, of treatments;
she alone wages this war within,
she alone withstands stares and whispers,
when her crown of strawberry hair
is lost in this battle.

The day the last lock falls,
her mother gives her
a small tissue-wrapped gift,
a hand-me-down,
a remembrance of child's play,
of traipsing about the house
trailing the silken scarf,
playing dress up,
now worn
now faded
now softer
and her eyes light up
as she lifts the silky folds,
of her Grandmother's pastel scarf,
and the flowers and butterflies
dance so proudly,
and she smiles.

It was worth every penny.