

Remembrance of Things Past

by Marilyn Reeves

My memories are like picture postcards. I remember people's faces, their personalities, how I felt about them. But the things we did together, often repeatedly, have coalesced into faded snapshots in my mind.

I do remember the freedom of growing up in a small town. Climbing the stone lions in the park. Edging around the ledge of the old school building, with cannibals in pursuit and alligators beneath the three-foot precipice. We turned cartwheels on the lawn; played with hollyhock dolls. Go sledding or skating in the winter. I can still smell the wet boards inside the old warming house and feel the hot needles of thawing feet.

On Sunday evenings my family would listen to the radio. Don't ask me about any specific episodes, I wouldn't remember. But I do remember Jack Benny's screeching violin and the way he'd say, "*Now, Donnnnn*". And of course, Fibber McGee's famous closet.

The school provided singing chorales, drama club, sporting events and dances. But our primary source of entertainment was the Salida Theater. My first love, Hopalong Cassidy, was soon replaced by Roy Rogers (although to tell the truth, I probably loved Trigger even more than Roy. Sorry Roy). In addition to the main feature, there was always a black & white newsreel, a short cliff-hanger, and a cartoon. My favorite was Bugs Bunny. "*Ehhhhhh, what's up, Doc?*"

John Wayne won the war almost as often as he won the West. And the musicals! Rita Hayworth. Virginia Mayo. My sister Jan and I would dance around the house, singing refrains from "The Loveliest Night of the Year."

On Halloween, we'd march from the park to the theater where we'd receive candy and prizes for best costume. At Christmas we'd meet Santa – the *real* Santa with his real, white beard – and receive still more candy.

One night Jan and I went to see "The House of Wax" with Vincent Price. Without a doubt, the scariest movie I had ever seen. Walking back home we had to pass by a creepy old man in a black coat and hat. We were sure he was following us. Jan exemplified the adage that if you can outrun your little sister, you have nothing to fear, although I was close on her heels as we raced to the house, screaming all the way!

I remember riding our bikes out to the Salida Hot Springs swimming pool. One time, as I was greeted by the scent of chlorine and the dazzling lights reflecting off the water, I realized that particular day would be over in the blink of an eye. That was more than 20,000 days ago. Last week I was aware that the upcoming Christmas holiday would be over almost before it got here. Blink, blink. It came and went.

And in the blink of an eye, I too, will just be a memory in someone else's mental album. A snapshot. A picture postcard of a life gone by.