

Four Eleven Emerson

By Sharon Buchan

I love the street where I live. The houses are brick and we have lots of trees. Some have needles and some have leaves with veins. Underneath the leaves there is a whole world that belongs to the little things - webs, cocoons and bugs. There are nuts, pine cones and seeds.

Oh that reminds me of these big bugs we have. My Grandfather told me that they are sewing needles and if I talk too much they will sew my mouth closed. I am very quiet when they are flying around. Sally says, "That, that is not true and they are really called Dragon Flies."

In the front yard there were mint plants. You could chew them or make mint tea. Sometimes I could stay up late and have a cup with my Grandmother.

In my front yard is the lilac bush. It smells really good.

After the summer rains we have these big fat worms called night crawlers. The Robin's like to pull them out of the ground and eat them or take them back to their nests. I am told not to worry because worms know how to grow their bodies back. I don't understand this because if someone pulled me apart I could not grow myself back. My Sunday school teacher tells me that I am very important to God and that he loves me and can count all the hairs on my head. I would rather have him put bodies back together then count hairs. Are worms more important than we are?

In the house we had a banister my sister and I liked to slide down. There's a Newell post at the end. No one can tell me why it is called a Newell post.

Upstairs we had a laundry shoot. Once my sister climbed in and slid all the way to the basement. She didn't get hurt too bad because we piled all the dirty clothes at the bottom. She only had to wear that white thing on her arm for a few weeks.

Sixty years have passed and I still love the house and street where I lived. My son is driving me there today. I get in the car and tell Todd if Four Eleven Emerson is for sale I'm going to buy it. Upon arrival my son says, "Guess what Mom, it's for sale." We meet the realtor and as we go in I see they have replaced the leaded glass door with solid wood. I remember we had a very big oak radio where we spent hours listening to Jack Benny, Fibber McGee & Molly, Amos & Andy, and The Inner Sanctum. Remember? "Only The Shadow Knows for Sure." My cell phone rings and eyes wander to the bottom of the stairs where the phone table and chair used to sit. We had party lines and I would get in trouble for listening to others conversations.

They have refinished old wood floors and I can picture my Oriental rug in the front room and my Persian Runner going down the hall. Wow the kitchen looks so small. I can hear the icemaker running. I remember the iceman bringing ice with those mean-looking tongs. In the dining room I remember getting out the good dishes and polishing silver for special occasions.

We go upstairs and I see the three big bedrooms are still the same with the oh so small closets. There is no longer a laundry chute. My sister will be glad to hear that. We go down into what used to be a scary basement. But now is an entertainment room. My German Grandfather use

to hide caramels down here. He would whistle and then say: "Witchee Koo" which is an ornery little gremlin that likes to tease and play tricks on children.

I love this house and the street where I used to live. My son says, "Mom don't forget your age, your Arthritis and you are having knee replacement surgery next week. And you need to live in a house without stairs. It takes every bit of my genteel breeding not to say, "SHUT UP!" I tell the realtor that I will get back to him in a few weeks.

In a few weeks I am riding my bike and climbing the stairs for exercise. I decide to walk back to the old house and then call the Realtor. When I get to Four Eleven Emerson there is a big red and white SOLD sign and I feel the tears streaming down my face. So what - my face has wrinkles inside the wrinkles and I still love this house. So what I am a little out of breath, but I am still breathing and I still love this street. I know they say you can never go back home, but I tried.

I stand here crying telling the old house, the street and neighborhood goodbye. Maybe I am just a silly old woman. But maybe I am a wise elder communicating with the spirit of love. Here is where I learned to love nature and enjoy the luxury of exercising a strong healthy body. Here is where I learned to love and respect my family, to treat others as I wanted to be treated. Here is where I listen to my Grandmother play Mozart and then topped off the night with a cup of mint tea.

Yes indeed here is where my heart is and where I intend to wander back to now and then just to keep my memories alive.