

Visions of My Mother

I see her trudging off to work. The figure of a middle-aged woman wrapped in a full-length fur coat and boots. I call it her “Joan Crawford” coat. She didn’t have a car, so she walked the mile or two.

I see her in a faded cotton housedress with hedge clippers in hand, the sound of metal on metal scissoring away as beads of perspiration formed above her lips.

I see her going off to baby-sitting jobs in the evening or on a Saturday afternoon, for the money to keep us in Catholic school. She always wears a straight black skirt and a short-sleeved red sweater; her figure is as thin as a pencil.

I see her making coffee cake late at night wrapped in her old pink chenille bathrobe, Ponds Cold Cream smeared on her face.

I see her in the basement, tending the furnace because the pilot light went out, cursing to herself “Hell’s Fire”. Quite appropriate now that I think about it!

But I also see her escaping into the pages of the latest Ellery Queen mystery novel, or watching her favorite westerns on television: Maverick, Sugarfoot, and The Big Valley.

She remarried later in life. Burdens were dissolved. Hard work rewarded by having raised three self-sufficient children.

But I will always remember her as the woman who could conquer anything. More because she had to than wanted to.