

Gran's Place by Beulah Gross

It was an ordinary one-bedroomed flat in the centre of the city. Traffic sounds, muted through the closed, net-curtained window, were as friendly as sunlight.

The kitchen - a misnomer - contained a two-plate electric cooker, a minute fridge and a sink above three shelves loaded with the utensils of living.

Between the sewing machine under the window and the sofa bed, was a large box filled with scraps of material - brocade, silk, satin, lace. Known as 'Granny's Pieces' they were off-cuts from the outfits she made for brides and their retinues. I scratched and scabbled through them looking for bits which Gran happily fashioned into clothes for my dolls.

This flat was a haven, a refuge from a destructive world of paternal anger, sibling rivalry, unhappy schooldays. Here I could indulge my love of books, listen over and over to Gran's stories of her amazing childhood in Lithuania and wrap myself in her warmth.

I walked past the old flat the other day. Heavy curtains hung grimly at the sides of the window, open to the increased dust and grime of today. A radio on the sill blared rock and roll musing adding to the noise of the traffic. A child screamed. Someone else lives there now.

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