

CORVUS REVIEW

Smell Nostalgia

by Diana Raab

One step back into my childhood.
I reminisce about fragrances
and melding memories
like gasoline stations
on our Sunday morning trip
to our bagel shop,
where gas odors
merged with dough.

Dad and I made our way to
the bagel store up the street
and the aroma of those dough circles
and the bagel-maker asking
which types we wanted.

On the way home dad and I
tore one in half to share,
still warm and steamy
and like every other time he ate,
he cracked open his car window
and lit up a cigarette—
the smell so present
I don't even recall noticing.

At home, the wet pavement scent
from our lawn sprinkler
or after a thunderstorm.

Mustn't forget the pungency of mother's
moth balls which she swore protected
her expensive wool sweaters,
but now I wonder if they planted my myeloma seeds
or years earlier, my breast cancer diagnosis.

What about the musty mildewy basement
where creepy masks hung on walls
and where I starched and iron dad's hankies—
a post-Holocaust obsession.

Oh and the smell of cotton candy
at the annual circus
or the odor of strange shoes
at our bowling alley
and its café hotdogs.

Years earlier, obsessed
with color by number
and Crayola crayons
lined up like soldiers
with sharpener in rear of box
and I'd jam my nose into the box
and snatch my biggest whiff.

My parents never stopped me
from smelling odors,
yet now, they speak of certain toxicities.
I guess every generation learns from the last.

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