



Grandmama's Creamer and Sugar

During the Victorian era, Grandmama Kerr was a young and independent woman who traveled from North Carolina to Washington D.C. to become a milliner, or more likely, to be close to her future husband who was training to be a doctor. Newly married, Grandmama hired Edie, a tall, strong black woman, to help raise the children, cook, and clean. When she became a widower, Grandmama supported her two children not by making hats, but by turning her large home into a boarding house. She never remarried. At breakfast, her six-year-old granddaughter, Robin, would beg for a cup of coffee just like Grandmama's, and Edie would pour the child a cup, set the creamer and sugar beside the cup in the same way she did for adults. Grandmama would pretend not to notice while Robin heaped spoons full of sugar and poured spouts of cream into her coffee. Grandmama, mother, and now Robin have handled the silver creamer and sugar bowl. Dented and worn, the pair has lost its luster because people use them.

Saved: Objects of the Dead | Jody Servon and Lorene Delany-Ullman



Stewart's Stethoscope

The heart is a half-prophet. —Yiddish proverb

The art of auscultation: “Lub-dub” is the basic heart sound. What the heart didn’t mean to say—Stewart heard through his stethoscope—an innocent murmur, a faulty valve or hole in an infant’s or a child’s heart. Rich or poor, he’d attended to all his young patients. Stewart felt a connection when listening to a kid’s heart; his wife, Beatrice, calls this “his heart to his patient’s heart.” At his only child’s wedding, Stewart was in remission from his own disease. It’s been six years since he died. *Things start fading, Beatrice says. You miss someone making you feel special. How did that feel? You almost don’t remember how that feels.* But she’s staying in the house—it’s so full of good.