We're almost finished when the flashlight picks up an odd-shaped box with painted flowers on it, the kind my Gram uses to keep her hats. When Sigh and I lift the lid we find it filled with photographs, mostly of my parents with Cath and a little boy who must be James. In a lot of them, Dad's got James riding on his shoulders. I'm not in any of the pictures so I probably wasn't born yet. I tie Sigh to my belt and we lift the box onto the closet ledge before we get down.

The other stuffed animals complain because we were gone so long but they're pretty delighted when they find out they all got new clothes, shouting, "Let's see" and "Me first!" as Sigh and I put the pile in front of them. The panda pulls the safari hat way down over his eyes. Becky Rabbit kicks her legs out so everyone will notice her white leather shoes. When everyone's dressed, Sigh and I line them up on the window sill to tell about our adventures in Antatctica.

When I hear my Dad yell "I'm home!", I'm dying to show him the photographs. I wait until he settles down with his newspaper and rye. Then I carry the hatbox into the recreation room and say "Hey, Dad, look what I found!"

He looks at the box and turns his head away fast: "Take it away. I don't want to look at them," he says. At dinner, he doesn't talk. He glances at me as if he's really worried and I know I've done something awful.

When he and my Mom come to kiss me goodnight, my Mom's tucking me in when she sees the animals on the windowsill. Her hand goes up to her mouth and she leaves the room. Dad leaves too. In the hall I hear her say, "Oh God, will I never have any peace?"

The next day Julianna our cleaning lady comes. When I go into my room the clothes are off my animals. Later when I sit on the stool beside Julie while she irons she says, "You shouldn't go into things without asking, Janie."

Jane Tasker is a graduate student in English Literature at York University. She has taught Creative Writing and Radio Journalism. She recently workshoped her memoir, from which these excerpts were taken, in a Life Writing class with Susan Swan.