

when two exhausted me. She had designed and tailored all our clothes and I was ashamed to admit that I didn't even own a needle and thread.

When it was my turn I asked Mom to talk about her greatest achievement. She said there were many things of which she was proud. One of those things was that she had raised a daughter who had the courage to do something she needed to do. Did she know I was planning to leave my marriage? A good mother didn't end a marriage just because *she* was unhappy, did she? Had I heard her correctly? Did she think that was a courageous act? For a moment I glimpsed the woman beneath the mother clothes.

As I was growing up I had nurtured the myth of my mother and grandmother as uncomplaining and self-sacrificing, blanketing everything with love and forgiveness. I did so without realizing that I was making them invisible to me as women. In trying to live up to that myth of mother, I reproduced for my daughter the same unachievable image of mother. And I did so without realizing that I was making my self invisible to her.

Since that hot summer day some things have changed but many things remain the same. The day we left the reunion, Grandma leaned into the car to hug and kiss me and my children goodbye—just one more time—just in case it was the last time. And it was. When I want to recall that moment, and that last touch, I touch my own cheek, or the face of my daughter and I feel her soft skin again. From time to time I imagine her making cookies or driving her red Mustang convertible.

My mother and I have tried, each in our own way, to make ourselves more visible to each other as women. I want to be a woman in my mother's eyes and I want to see her as the woman she is. Yet, my old ways of thinking and behaving are so resistant to my deep desire for those ways to be different. The urge to maintain the priority of the mother-daughter relationship over the woman-woman relationship is compelling. When I

am in pain, I turn to my mother, not as a woman in search of solace, but as her daughter in need of a mother's embrace. And she responds to me with her mother love and I feel healed.

This year my daughter turns 23. She has heard pieces of this story before and she will read this account too. I'm hoping it will make me ever more visible to her as a woman who is also her mother. I expect it will also initiate another of our dialogues about woman dreams.

That summer and still today, I am learning to recognize old patterns in my life and in the history of mothering in my family. A pattern of accepting the rules as sacred and unchangeable ... of learning to make the unacceptable invisible. A pattern of ques-

tions asked but seldom answered ... of woman dreams kept hidden from view. A pattern of being a woman subsumed by motherhood ... a destination that was expected of us and a destination we expect of ourselves.

That summer and still today, I am also learning to create new patterns in my life and in the history of mothering in my family—for my sake and for that of my daughter.

*Diana L. Gustafson is a Ph.D. student in Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and in the Collaborative Program for Women's Studies at the University of Toronto. Her current research interest is health care reform and its impact on women and families in Canada.*

## ROSLYN SCHWARTZ

### Lost

The last time I saw my grandmother whole  
we shared lunch across my mother's kitchen table  
She painted stories for me

childhood seven sisters in one bed  
teen years dancing on stage at summer  
camp

early days of marriage travelling with  
her two year old daughter, living in a  
tent

vague images now  
light and shadow in my memory

I wish I could remember what she said

I did not know this moment would not come  
again  
and so I watched the clock  
let the present pull me from the past  
left when it was time to meet a friend downtown

why did it ache so much to say goodbye

The next time that I saw her  
my grandmother could not remember who I was.

*Roslyn Schwartz lives in Kingston with her four children,  
one spouse, and countless memories of her family of origin.*