

## Inheritance

We met early one Saturday. Two sisters unlocking a door to that still room. Dust swirling as light streamed from one small curtained window near the worn chair that was her final resting place. What remains?

A wall covered with photos of smiling grandchildren, tape peeling from the wall. Stacks of yellow legal pads on the floor and felt-tip pens for easy reach to draw a sketch or take notes as she watched her favorite political show, Firing Line, Buckley's caustic wit and erudite speech breaking down an opponent's arguments. On a crowded bookshelf, a few volumes of classics and a Rembrandt art book that one son gave to honor a mother so gifted in art.

In the bedroom, a photo of a handsome man in a fireman's cap and jacket, the photo's glass frame smudged with fingerprints of the widow who greeted this husband with a smile and kiss before rising from the bed each day. On a nightstand, a glass of water, medicine bottles, a rubber-banded book bulging with prayer cards, and a silver metal rosary, the beads still bearing the impressions of teething babies that were held by the nursing mother, her days buoyed by moments of prayer.

And then the cherished discovery, a tattered envelope filled with yellowed newspaper clippings, a drawing of a young soldier holding his first-born son, and wartime letters, mementos of love, linking a young couple during years of separation.

What remains? Not an heirloom necklace, hefty trust account, or a family mansion. What is passed on? A love of curiosity, a passion for creativity, and a devotion to faith and family. What remains? An inheritance of love.