Decision

Edith White

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Hands in sudsy water
I bathe fragile cups with care:
Each gold-rimmed china shell,
Rinsed and set to drain.
For fifty years or so they have graced
My cupboard shelves.
Still I feel they really are
My mother's English Bone.

She loved to greet the twilight
With a friendly cup of tea,
Not bags and water but
A fragrant brew of leaves
Steeped in a silver pot.
She passed each guest the tray
With a pitcher of foaming cream,
Tongs for sugar lumps.

They sat to share their friendship
With talk that warms—
Filtered through tea leaves,
Shaping the world to cozy.

Aunt Bertha, pince-nez on her nose,
Fingered her black neck ribbon
And stated her views precisely
As she nibbled scones with her tea.
Grandmother's fluttering hands
Patted her fly-away hair;
She would shake her head and murmur
At the modern world's oddity.

Alone I am left to recall
The sound of their chatter and laughter,
Faint echoes of times past.
My memory begins to dim.
It is time I made the decision—
I must pack the china in tissue
For my granddaughter now.

there's nothing beautiful about it