

## Patchwork

It was going to be a patchwork quilt for a cot – but then, baby's grow so fast and time is so short...

so it was re-purposed as a patchwork quilt for a single bed, but children grow so fast and time is so short...

so it was repurposed as a patchwork quilt for a double bed  
but that was too big a task when time is so short...

so it languished,

lots of hexagons, many joined together in 'plates' waiting for time and enthusiasm

It sat in a bag full of scraps, bits of old shirts, pillowcases, blouses, dresses, skirts, trousers.

It sat there with a story in each hexagon, a story of my family, but unfinished.

And I found it again during lockdown, packed into a bag with my button box, my dressmaking shears [hidden from sight – please, not cutting cardboard!] and paraphernalia of the past when I would make pinafore dresses and dungarees for toddlers and gingham uniform for infant school-girls [with the zip down the front instead of those difficult buttons]

What a host of memories. Each little scrap taking me back to the house where we lived then, and all the busyness of family life. A history book, and a treasure house. And taking me back to a time when life was changing fast and the words of this poem came to my mind.

Each piece I work,  
Each scrap of fabric  
In my hand is you  
The child in summer dress  
Or clownish trousers  
The schoolgirl's gingham  
Edged with darker blue.  
The fancy dress made for the Brownie revels  
A church dress made of quiet hue.

Each piece I work  
Each scrap of fabric  
In my hand is you  
The girl in shorts  
Wrapped in a great big pinny  
Stirring cake mix

With determined air  
The fancy dress made for a Pied Piper  
A belled and tasselled hat on your unruly hair

These patches put together  
Weave a story  
Of times now gone  
That loiter in the past.  
The presence gone,  
But still the memory lingers  
But memories with the colours fading fast.

These patches put together  
Weave a story  
The story of my life  
Laid gently here  
The people I have loved  
In times and seasons  
The needle plied to show  
How much I care.

So as you fold and lay this work aside  
As you wrap the memories of the past  
Remember that you fold and wrap a lifetime  
Patchwork, little memories that last.

Lord you see the whole patchwork of our lives, spread before you, the colours, the patterns, the delights, the sorrows, you know how the patches have been put together, the people who are here amongst it all, the way they have drawn us into new worlds, have supported us, have loved us. Throughout the making of this patchwork you have been present, guiding our hands as we plied the needles, linking patch to patch, drawing in family, drawing in friends, drawing those you have sent us to love. We thank you for your endless patience with us, for your care and support, but most of all we thank you for enjoying this work of our lives, for relishing all that we do and for showing us how to love through your love. Amen