

**Sweet Remembrances-Dr. Barbara D. Parks-
Lee-Washington, DC**

As I look back at those on whose shoulders
I stand,
I cannot but marvel at symbols meaningful to
them and transferred to me.

Our family was not wealthy in things,
but we were rich in love.

Symbols of caring, such as my grandparents
working hard for low paying wages—
or for my father's, urban sharecropper funds—
after he worked 12 hours a day, six days a week

Symbols of love: Hot biscuits or hot rolls on
Sunday after Sunday school and church;
A house my momma dared dust or dirt to enter;

Riding on the running board as Granddaddy
pulled out the driveway on his way to work;

Splitting 4 popsicles so each of us girls could
enjoy the cool goodness as we sat in the
covered glider 2 seater;

Licking the spoon or eggbeater after one of my
mama's famous cakes or sweet potato pies;

Picking peaches and watching my grandmother
make Peach cobbler and Peach Jelly;

Riding my bicycle by taking turns with my
sisters;

Listening to *The Shadow* and *Fibber McGee and
Molly* while sitting on the rug in front of the
radio;

Visiting my ex-slave great grandmother
and coming back to our home loaded with
Mason jars of canned corn, tomatoes, green
beans, peas, and fruit resting in boxes
in the trunk of Granddaddy's robin's egg blue
39 Dodge;

Lap robes on the back seats of the Dodge
so we children wouldn't get cold;

Clothes my Mama washed, rinsed, blued,
and wrung out by hand in the bathtub,
then hung on the line in all kinds of weather;

My grandmother's slingshot and b-b's
to keep birds away from the clothesline;

My father and his father making sure
our shoes were spit-shined
and properly healed;

Our pet duck, Petey, and how we held
his duck funeral after his encounter with a rat;

Breakfast every morning;
Packed lunches, or lunch money,
when there was any to spare;

New school clothes and shoes
Every first day opening of school;

My father, mother, and grandfather stoking
the coal burning furnace during cold weather;

Being warned not to stick our fingers in the
whirring blades of the black fans
during hot weather;

Saying grace at every meal
and bedtime prayers;
Being encouraged to follow excellence,
and demanded to have respect for elders and
each other;

So many symbols of love and being loved
cannot help but make me grateful
for everyone and everything.