

Welsh Dresser', *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, The All scenes (texts in plain font) are taken from Jane Kendell, "The

**Red Die** ■ The table next to the Welsh dresser had six settings, my place was between my sister and great aunt, facing my mother, and diagonally opposite my grandfather, with a chair by the window for my father, which was only sometimes occupied. In the scene I am poised cautiously on a turquoise cushion unperched on the polished surface of my wooden chair, nervously waiting for that moment when it slips sideways

**Hook (with an Eye)** ■ A single object can remain mute, or it can provoke a response in me, in you. What is a hook without an eye? My spinster aunt loved detective stories. She perched on the polished surface of my wooden chair, left behind her a mystery surrounding an unengaged engagement ring.

**Tailor's Chalk** ■ Tailor's chalk makes marks for action, which have a certain short life span. Like chalk on a blackboard, these marks will be rubbed out. Unlike chalk on a blackboard, they are marks for another making, for a line of cutting, folding or sewing, which will partially erase the first response in me, in you. What is a hook without an eye? My spinster aunt loved detective stories. She perched on the polished surface of my wooden chair, left behind her a mystery surrounding an unengaged engagement ring.

**Random Buttons** (in a Bag) ■ The Welsh dresser is an archive: it holds a key to my past, and the past of a place where it always rained with Needle and Thread) ■ Buttons are odd things. Each one is of little interest, yet as a collection they fascinate. Singular and unattached, they are seemingly insignificant, but sewn in a row onto a garment they hold things together. In sequence and in juxtaposition things look different when they are next to one another. As my grandfather, the butcher, faced up from his dark coffin, tea and tongue sandwiches were served from the Welsh dresser in the room next door.

**Key** ■ Hung with gorgeous antique jugs – which could never be touched – and that rattled every time a coal lorry passed by on the road outside, the Welsh dresser gleamed through my childhood, through Christmas dinners and Sunday lunches, through rice puddings, cherry corona, beetroot chutney, faggots and chips. My great aunt taught needlework and cookery; not a day passed without being asked to go from the kitchen to the Welsh dresser to fetch an item for some kind of domestic task. These trips were fraught with anxiety for the Welsh Dresser was a little unsteady on its feet, the drawers stuck as you pulled, causing the delicate jugs dangling above them to sway a little and chink. The drawers still smell of the hems they contained – a wooden ruler, pencils with rubber tops, carbon-copy notebooks, buttons, coins, tailor's chalk, a hook (without an eye), a red die (rather strangely), and a key. The Welsh dresser is an archive: it holds a key to my past, and the past of a place where it always rained with Needle and Thread) ■ Buttons are odd things. Each one is of little interest, yet as a collection they fascinate. Singular and unattached, they are seemingly insignificant, but sewn in a row onto a garment they hold things together. In sequence and in juxtaposition things look different when they are next to one another. As my grandfather, the butcher, faced up from his dark coffin, tea and tongue sandwiches were served from the Welsh dresser in the room next door.

**Coin** ■ My grandfather had a favourite joke. At Christmas, having bathed the pudding with brandy and set fire to it, he would cut slices, placing one in each dish and then distribute the portions around the table. On discovering a copper coin in my own pudding, I would be delighted, thinking I was the lucky one. My grandfather would search in his own dish and feigning surprise would pull out a piece of folded foil. On unwrapping it, a pound note would be discovered. As my disappointment registered across my face, he would laugh and hand it over to me as a generous gift. After his stroke when he failed to find the words he required – objects were still able to speak for themselves.

**Cutting** ■ Tucked in between the lustre jugs on the shelves of the Welsh Dresser were smaller pots and tins that held many useful things: needles, threads, elastic bands, but also a selection of yellowed local newspaper cuttings registering key events in the family. Reading them reminds me of my motherland, not the country of my own birth, but that of my mother, and the coming together of the family around the dining table, on ordinary days, at special times of the year and for big occasions – births, marriages and deaths.

**White Linen** ■ I dream of the house at least five generations; in my childhood it occupied the dining room of my great aunt's house in a small town. As a child it was the place where it always rained in the holidays, but now, as it slips away from me, I already begin to miss. I was in the dining room; the rest of the house was empty except this one room. The furniture was far too big and covered in linen. The air was thick with silence. With the curtains faded where the fabric met the light.

**The Welsh Dresser** ■ Constructed in the 1830s, and made of light oak in a form typical of dressers of its age from South Wales, the Welsh dresser has an open rack with three shelves, a base with four side-drawers and a short centre drawer with a shaped apron beneath. The open potboard base has four turned front legs, terminating in block feet. The Welsh dresser been in the family at least five generations; in my childhood it occupied the dining room of my great aunt's house in a small town. As a child it was the place where it always rained in the holidays, but now, as it slips away from me, I already begin to miss. I was in the dining room; the rest of the house was empty except this one room. The furniture was far too big and covered in linen. The air was thick with silence. With the curtains faded where the fabric met the light.

**White** ■ The result of the secondary elaboration which is Freud's interest here is the conscious memory: very precisely, the 'screen memory'. But to evoke this term (Deckerinnerung) is to indicate that it both covers over and presents the resurgence of something: precisely, the repressed'.

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