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Seasons Sewn

by Sheila Murphy

Long long ago...

the *da-dum da-dum* of her grandma's sewing machine,
a filigreed treadle rocking *back-and-forth back-and-forth*,
arthritic fingers coaxing cotton high
behind a sleek black arm labeled SINGER
in golden scrolls, satin-smooth oak drawers
lined with rainbow spools bobbins buttons thimbles
a tufted pincushion sprouting needles and pins.

Later...

precision layouts aligning selvage bias nap,
yard by yard, year by year, the rustle
of tissue paper patterns, smoothed and pinned,
seams darts gathers gores, skirts dresses suits,
slipcovers pillows draperies curtains swags,
broadcloth batiste muslin velveteen,
raw silk from a Kowloon street market,
Thai silk from Bangkok, Liberty lawn from London,
tweed from the mills of Pendleton Harris Donegal.

Once...

the swish and shimmer of embroidered silk organza
over ivory slipper satin sewn on a rented Singer for
a Pearl Harbor wedding.

And now...

her veined and mottled hands corral a jungle
of pastel animals cavorting on quilts stitched
for twin granddaughters, a layered fabric of love
first felt at their great-great-grandmother's treadle.

