

# The Objects of Our Lives

## Installment 4

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We say “things” are not important, it is the people and experiences of our lives that make it rich. But is that always true? This is the question we put to Guild writers, asking them to craft a story—fiction or nonfiction, prose or poetry—about an everyday object that represents an



Photo by Jim Tegman

important part of their life. The project was inspired by a *Harvard Gazette* essay by Leslie Jamison (read it [here](#)).

We are overjoyed by the number of writers who participated. Rather than creating one large document, we are serializing these pieces. Several pieces will be posted each week for our readers to savor and contemplate.

**The objects on display these next two weeks deal with romantic love—even if the object is all that remains from a past marriage. This selection also includes our only fiction submission in the project.**

*Maribeth*  
*RBWG Executive Director*

## The Pin. Circa 1971. Alice Morris.

I met Ron in Canada at a hostel outside Banff. He was flipping pancakes over a Coleman stove. From Pennsylvania, he and three buddies were traveling the country in a converted bread van they had painted black and yellow and dubbed, *The Bumblebee*. The *dudes* from his campsite invited my Minnesota hitchhiking companion and me to stop by for breakfast. I wasn't hungry, but walked over anyway.

That's when I had my first good look at Ron, and his blue jeans; flared bottoms, pant legs embroidered with colorful designs, his handiwork. The sun glinted off a silver pin displayed on Ron's jeans several inches above the knee. It was of a ship sailing across the sea.



Eventually, my friend and I were invited to travel on *The Bumblebee*. Ultimately Ron and I started talking, and liking each other, a lot. One afternoon while crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, Ron handed me the pin and said he wanted us to grow old together.

I wore the pin everywhere, even while visiting Ron's family. During one visit, the pin disappeared. Turns out, Ron's adult sister took it. Turns out, Ron had taken the pin from her jewelry box before *The Bumblebee Trip*. Turns out, he never mentioned this to me, the schmuck. But, maybe like magpies and crows, sometimes siblings steal shiny objects too, maybe even to attract a mate. Yet, in spite of all attempts to clear things up, Ron's family and relatives still believe I am a thief.

## Burgundy Leaf. 2020. Kim DeCicco. (fiction)



The air was crisp and sweet as she and her lover strolled beneath an autumn tree. Burgundy leaves tangled in her graying hair. Their aroma of marjoram with sage filled her nose, soothed her aching heart.

Time was calling her home that starry night, but she did not want to go; life had become too perfect.

She and her lover collapsed onto the soft ground. She rolled atop him and kissed him gently as they nestled into the leaf-strewn grass. His breath whispered along her skin, “I love you.” She pressed a finger to his lips so he’d say no more. She rubbed her cheek against his to collect memories of his exquisiteness.

A glittering beam reached from the darkened heavens to touch her shoulder blades. She twisted to face its light, lifted a hand to stay its descent. “Remember me,” she implored as she curled against her lover to embrace him one last time.

She slid onto her back, her arms limp and outstretched. Time collected her soul and lifted it into the night. A leaf drifted from her hair to rest on her lover’s eyes when his tears began to flow.

He preserved that leaf in a thick and heavy tome. He took it out on lonely days, to hold—to cherish.

## Mystery Spoon. Circa 1970s. Karen Sandler.

My husband was freshly divorced in 1985 when we met. He'd married young when it seemed the thing to do, until the grainy adhesive that held the marriage together eventually dissolved. The union ended amicably without children (though not without pain, but that's not my story to tell).

When he and I combined our households after we wed, I discovered all kinds of interesting objects: bottles of stale spices, a toothbrush holder past its prime, random chopping boards sporting scars from overzealous use, mismatched cutlery. Among the latter was an odd little stainless-steel spoon with clean contemporary lines, a round-shaped bowl, and a handle shorter than you'd expect. My husband had no idea where it came from. The only clues were the letters 'BOAC' stamped on the back, suggesting it was an airline spoon from the defunct carrier British Overseas Airways Corporation that eventually became British Airways.



"Maybe Debbie stole it," he said.

I've imagined her holding the spoon during the in-flight meal (remember those?), admiring its shape, weight, and balance (as I do now), then slipping it into her bag. She left it behind when she left the marriage. Maybe she didn't love it anymore. I think of her leaving it especially for me to cherish, which I do, for all sorts of reasons.

## Handcrafted Two Flying Gulls Pendant, 14K Gold. 1985. Rita Nelson.



When my second husband courted me, he wrote me a touching love letter and gave me a copy of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, a fable about a seagull that is trying to learn about life, flight, and self-perfection. The letter described our relationship as two Jonathans who fly together for a while, then separate to fly on their own, but in the end, always come back and fly as one.

Five years into our forty-year marriage, my Jonathan flew far, far away and hurt me deeply. Occasionally that old hurt comes back to haunt me. It is an unwelcome memory. As we were flying back together those many years ago, I gave my errant love a Jonathan reminder.

Our jeweler crafted two gold Jonathans in flight. I hung them on a light chain that would remind him of our linked marriage vows, but not so heavy as representing a ball and chain. We still needed room to go our separate ways from time to time.

My Jonathan wore his pendant with pride until the day he died, enjoying telling others of our love story. I also have a similar pair of gulls on my charm bracelet. We call them our “logo,” symbols of our deep love. I still have that letter and perhaps someday our grandchildren will read it and know how intimately we were bound. R.I.P., my Jonathan. I’ll be with you anon.