

9. Room Sweet Room

The room I actually think of as “my room” is our guest bedroom. It is old-fashioned, all of the furniture mahogany hand-me-downs from my mother. The bed has a bookcase headboard which holds books special to me -- Rossetti’s poems, Poe’s stories, Shakespeare’s plays, a Gideon Bible, **The Golden Bough**, Plato’s **Republic**, Ellison’s **Invisible Man**, Toffler’s **Future Shock**, Neruda’s **Memoirs**. Instead of using a bedspread, I alternate quilts collected over the years. My favorite is one I pieced together from miscellaneous squares made by my great-grandmother Preskitt. Throw pillows and a comforter crocheted by Aunt Mary make the bed a comfortable place to curl up and read. Dresser scarves embroidered by Aunt Artie and my grandmother protect the dresser and chest-of-drawers.

The decorations on the walls are all very special to me. Embroideries and needlepoint are ones I have done. Although I like my cross-stitch sampler, my favorite embroidery is one of two Persian cats, white and gray, finely detailed in satin thread. Several of the other decorations follow a rainbow motif -- wind chimes painted by my sister, a laminated jigsaw puzzle, a poster that uses bright-colored quotes to create a rainbow shape, a stick-kite given me by a Japanese foreign exchange teacher, and a finger-painting my teenage niece gave me when she was two years old.

The “set-arounds” are also old-fashioned. Years ago I découpaged a lap desk covered with poems I had written, and I keep all of my own writing in it. I also have an old hurricane oil lamp my grandfather kept in the cellar of the home place. Two wooden carvings made by an old friend look modern and abstract in one sense, but the smooth surfaces, hand-oiled and gray with patina, make them look like ancient family heirlooms in another sense. Vanilla-scented candles and a Tiffany glass filled with rose petal potpourri make the room even smell old-fashioned and nostalgic.

Altogether, the room is quiet, comfortable, filled with personal and family memories that help make it the place where I best daydream and reminisce.