

Fragment of a Dress

In the summer of 2022, artist Hannah Lamb invited visitors to the Brontë Parsonage Museum to write about an item of clothing that holds significance to them. These texts have been embroidered to become part of the 'Fragment of a Dress' artwork. Below is a transcript of the handwritten responses, reproduced as faithfully as possible from the originals.

A cream handknitted cardigan found in the back of a charity shop. The design and Knit is beautiful with 3D berries down the front and sleeve. I often wonder who knitted it, and the time taken to make something so beautiful. I will treasure the cardigan.

My soft leather Docs had them for 5 years +, wear them everyday and they're still going strong ❤️ them.

Bright blue 70's jumpsuit with big white & yellow flowers. I wore it to a funeral, and on birthdays. It's a happy outfit!

Pleated skirt because it reminds me of myself and is so pretty and long Cadigan it is so comfy.

My self knit shawl brings a splash of colour to any outfit and keeps me warm without the need for uncomfortable and scratchy scarves and jumpers.

My silver wedding dress covered in sequins and beads that sparkled like snowflakes. Perfect for a winter wedding!

When I was thirteen, my grandmother brought me a tee-shirt that I still own today. It's now twenty-five years old. The shirt reads "California home grown Lemons". We are from California, and my maiden name - grandmas surname - was Lemons. She thought it adorable.

My dads TOOTAL scarf - he passed 22 years ago - I keep it with me all of the time.

Knit woolen hat that my gran used to teach me how to knit. I would try it and she would take out the wool and re-do it It is very warm and has a bobble pom pom on the top.

From my dressing up box, a taffetta pink gown with pearls and diamantés around the neckline - because I was a child it reached the floor - looking back it must have been a ballroom dancers dress - But I always felt like Anne Boleyn in it.... Emily in Gondall x

I have a lehenga I bought from India that makes me feel like a princess whenever I wear it! I absolutely adore it and it looks gorgeous, it makes me proud of my culture.

Wool Coat

My mother was a seamstress, making all her clothes for most of her life. I still have a wool coat she wore often. When I wear it, I feel her hugging me.

NAVY BLUE DRESS

I clearly remember my first "grown-up" dress that was bought for me at age 13 to wear to a wedding. By today's standards, it wasn't anything fancy, but it was special to me.

Hand Knitted Sweater

This garment is significant to me because I bought it in Chile to support the Pumalin National Park - created following a huge donation of land by the founder of North Face. It's undyed wool in lovely shades of brown. A long lasting, wearable memory of an adventurous holiday.

My "Maxi" Coat

I had wanted a “maxi” (floor length) coat but my mother resisted the style. Christmas Eve, preparing for church, I was given an early present! Inside was my “maxi” coat, that also had a piece that unzipped/removed to make it a knee length coat. Satisfied my mother and me!

1920's Chinese silk lounge dress, I bought whilst at art college. I have subsequently refashioned it into a short cloak. I still wear it to go night clubbing + music gigs.

My swimming costume - both a part of the route out of lockdown depression + a reminder of years ago when I stopped swimming, and why.

My Aran jumper, bought by my Mum in Ireland on one of our frequent holidays there. Now she's passed it down to me.

My dad's floral shirts. I wear these now and feel connected to a whimsical side to him I am less familiar to.

The “African Chief's Hat”

A gold embroidered velvet smoking hat brought by Grandad from West Africa. Has been passed down the family with the legend that Grandpa was 'crowned' as a chief.

When I was nineteen I had a short black dress with a big black satin collar, it was very short and I loved it.

Multi-coloured cotton flannel. Comfiest item of clothing I own. I used to share it with my sister who now lives in Germany.

Pink Party Dress worn when I was 5. Made by my aunt for a school party. At the party I lay on a sheet of paper and was drawn around - my silhouette was then coloured in.

My patchwork coat is created from duvets, curtains + memorabilia collected over a lifetime of travel in 3rd world countries as a volunteer teacher + community worker. Wearing it, touching it, smelling the fragrance evoke vivid and heartfelt memories of the time + the people who created the fabric often by hand.

I had a red hooded jacket as a little girl, I liked it because it reminded me of Little Red Riding Hood.
E. Desimone
New Orleans
USA

A stripey blazer with a pink hood.

My parents bought it for me when I was eight or nine & it was already nearly too small for me so we went to so many M&S stores for bigger sizes but no luck - I grew out of it in a few months. I loved it so much & wore it everywhere in that short time.

Thick wool socks that are wearing thin in places. I have recently learnt about visible darning, and am now extending the life of my cosy socks with bright, contrasting colours.

My denim jacket has brought me confidence since I was a teenager - every spring when I break it out it still gives me that same feeling.

MY MOTHER SEWED EMBROIDERED PILLOWCASE WHEN I WAS BORN 12 SEPT '55 STILL HAVE IN MY POSSESSION WITH TEDDY BEARS AND FLOWERS AND A DOLL I STILL USE IT ON MY BED IT REMINDS ME OF HER SHE DIED IN 1979

My Purple a Black wedding skirt and corset, handmade by myself.

My Gran was an unbelievable knitter and made me a big slouchy, cosy cardigan. Soon after, I complained to her that so many women's clothes are made without pockets. The next time I saw her, she'd made me another cardi with super deep pockets! Now she's gone I put it on everytime I wish I could give her a big hug ♥

My Harry Potter onsie, I've worn it almost everyday since my nana bought it me six years ago.

A shop bought dress given to me as a child. My Grandmother was a tailor and all my clothes were home made. I wore the dress until it fell to pieces.

When I was about 10 I had a white dress with red polka dots which I absolutely loved. It had a rara skirt so the layers flew out when I spun round and embroidered cherry on the top.

Afghan Dress

I the 70's I spent my student grant on a wonderful full length dress from Afghanistan. It had a beautifully embroidered front and was multi-coloured. I still have it.

My Mum's scarf as it still smells of her and her house. Makes me feel at home.

My grey hoodie, I have had it for many years and it is still in good condition! It helps keep me warm when I am out walking the dog.

A doll's dress - all that remains of a porcelain 1950's Victorian doll; indigo velvet, old gold mettalic lace and a broad border of silk embroidered ribbon. I still have it - though it is a little battered now and the matching bonnet has long since gone;- I cannot dispense with it - nor shall I ever; I wrote a book in which my protagonist wears it; it is part of my childhood, my sense, myself; who I am.

A pair of size 8 jeans that I wore after a very long illness. Nothing fit me, except my jeans. I still have them and I will wear them again.

Emma Sands

Essex

43 years

Long floral skirt. Vintage and thrifted. Never worn something so true to myself.

My very first pair of Dr Martins when I was about six. I still wear them to this day (not the originals!)

A patterned jacket

I found this in a charity shop in Mass. USA on the only visit I have made there. It reminds me of the road trip I made with my friend, visiting Mass, New England and Vermont. When I wear it, lovely memories are recreated of that trip.

“Un pantalon noir ou Bleu marine, parce que je me sens bien dedans”

Fleur, 7 ans

Many years ago, probably five or so years after our marriage, my mother-in-law, who I always referred to as Grandma after our children were born, made me a coat - I cannot remember whether it was a birthday or Christmas present - but it is precious. It was not the only thing she made for me but it is the only one that I still have. It still fits me like a glove all these years later. About eight years ago, with trepidation, I took it to have a zip replaced, I need not have worried - the gentleman who repaired it clearly understood what it meant to me.,

My grandad's handkerchief

My grandad always had a clean, cotton handkerchief folded in his pocket. When he died, I took one from his drawer and used it to wipe my tears at his funeral.

Pop's cardigan ♥

My big baggy black bikers jumper 3 sizes too big but a great friend and comfort on many a long journey. Always ready with a hug a giver of warmth and a saviour of life. Now passed on to my loving daughter. May it bring her what it brought me.

A SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS
T-SHIRT FROM WHEN I WAS YOUNGER
IT DOESN'T FIT ANYMORE
BUT I STILL KEEP IT

The blue pinafore my Mum made for me when I was about 4. She embroidered Goldilocks on the pocket because she looked like me.

MY "SPECIAL" GARMENT IS A WAISTCOAT I MADE FROM AN OLD PAIR OF TAPESTRY CURTAINS. I MADE IT WITH SUE JUST AFTER I MET HER IN 2018, SUE IS NOW MY WIFE - ALAN (73)

My daughter's ladybird poncho was a well-worn item of clothing when she was under 5 years old. I suspect the love for the item came from me and not her! The red fleece background with brown circles of fleece and a little hood with ladybird 'feelers' always made me smile.

CROCHET CREAM CAP SLEEVE JUMPER HAND-MADE BY MY GRANDMA WAS PASSED ONTO MY MUM AND NOW I HAVE IT AND WEAR IT LOTS - TIMELESS MEMORIES OF LOVE

My Donny Osmond Cap

My floral, seascape shirt, very bright colours, gets attention it is wonderful to wear bright colours

A heavy wool poncho, repurposed from an old blanket. I sewed all my old Brownie badges on and used to wear it for Guide campfires. It reminds me of hearing hundreds of voices signing together.

Pelican Socks

Wee orange and blue socks that have little pelicans on them. They are very cozy!

My favourite pyjama bottoms and old woolly jumper. They make me feel snug and safe.