*The Satin Bedcoat*

It intrigued me from the moment I saw it. I was drawn to its satin quilting. Hues of coral, green and gold threading manifested into glorious flowers. It had the intricate patterns of a Spanish mantilla.

I obsessed inquisitive of its history and journey. Who was the delicate, dainty woman from long past to whom it belonged? Tiny in its size as its owner must have been, perhaps a woman who had birthed many babies then lastly ready to sail the clouds of heaven leaving behind the lovely bedcoat. Soft as the satin threads it was woven from; it had a radiance all its own.

It was a maze entering my thoughts and overtaking them. I knew as sure as the day would begin; I would somehow find its previous days. This was no ordinary bedcoat but more a ballroom gown, precious in its grandeur and ladylike in its era. Someone else had treasured it, had its memories born with it. The unknown memories were in the pockets. Someone had revered it enough to put it in the convalescent home box at the church. When I found it, the solitude and warmth came over me. I intended to find a woman who would need it and its beauty in her last days or when her memory was gone and she could no longer see the past of what was, whom she loved and needed the bedcoat’s soul.

Fervently, I tried to find where it had come from. “Do you know it? Do you know how it came here?” No one seemed to know. In nearly everyone’s eyes it was as if I sought moss under a certain tree in a forest. I supposed that they could not understand why I attached so much importance to it. Day after day I sought out a clue that might lead me down the path to its story. Then I found its bittersweet past.

It was one of those crisp autumn days when the sun shines beautifully with the wind making shadows dance wherever I stepped. Lightly up the steps to Sunday morning service, I just felt today would be the day I would solve the bedcoat’s mystery. I was almost saddened that this door was soon to be closed. The past several weeks had been good bringing new friends and acquaintances, and an inner peace had come into my life.

It was after the service that the woman came up to me. I knew it was she when I saw the warm smile. I had no idea how touched I would feel when the satin bedcoat’s history was revealed. I had the feeling she knew I would understand. Without a word we walked out into the clear sky day and stopped underneath the willow in front of the church. She told me how she had worn the bedcoat when her son had been born. Her grandmother had given it to her mother