

300 words about quilting

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA
AT THE TIME

Quilters Newsletter invites you to share your quilt stories with other QN readers in 300 words or less. If you have a quilt story that fits the topics listed, be it funny, sad, poignant or anything in between, we want to hear from you. Send your story, its title and your complete contact information to submissions@qnm.com. Put "300 Words" in the subject line.

Ah, to Be 20

LEANNE JACKSON

I was lucky enough to be "adopted" by my favorite college professor and his wife in the 1970s. We shared many leisurely dinners in their living room, and I spent one Thanksgiving at their 18th-century farmhouse on Cape Cod. So when they asked me for a favor, of course I said yes. They wanted two old down sleeping bags taken apart and made into a down comforter. I was experienced; I had made exactly one tied quilt. How hard could it be?

My parents offered me the use of their basement to wrestle the down from the sleeping bags. Then they retreated upstairs to allow me to learn my own lessons. Did you know that down sleeping bags are constructed of many, many sturdy tubes? And that when you pull out the feathers you create static electricity that causes them to cling to everything? I vividly recall being covered in feathers from head to toe. Every surface of the basement was covered as well, including the low ceiling. I had to inhale very gingerly.

I herded feathers into the nylon bag that I had sewn. How to know when it was full enough? The feathers had no certain volume. Eventually I had more in the bag than on me, I hoped. Closing the bag, quilting it and making the cotton cover were comparatively easy. I'm sure my father came across feathers in his basement workshop for months, maybe years.

My friends never inquired about the feathery cloud in our basement. They loved the comforter and it kept them warm in that drafty Cape Cod house for several years. When they sold the house, they generously gave me the comforter. It is the warmest cover I have ever slept under. I have never been tempted to make another.

