

On my window sill sits a small, dusty turtle. His body is made of a conch shell; his legs are made of tiny white sea shells that match his head. The small plastic googily eyes face the window as if he is looking off into the leafy tree tops of my neighbor's yard. a glob of hardened glue mysteriously stains his back. I think at one time this was a stack of turtles—only he has survived. He, let's call him Fred, was purchased at a road side stand in Florida—the kind that sells mesh bags of oranges, dried crocodile heads, necklaces made of sharks' teeth and animals cleverly constructed from sea shells. Fred was a little token purchased for one of my daughters. He probably would wind up in a junk drawer where he was tragically separated from the family riding on his back. I recall seeing a turtle on my friend Margi's window sill staring out into the snow. She told me, "Everyone has a turtle somewhere, facing out. They bring you wealth." I don't remember when, but at sometime point, early in my family life I plucked Fred from that junk drawer and place him hopefully on my window sill. I imagine I was about to throw him into a glad bag full of candy wrappers, mateless Barbie shoes and broken barrettes when I recalled my friend's words.

Fred has moved 3 times with me. He has rested on at least 4 different window sills. He has watched worried neighbors gather, hug and cry on an early fall morning, snow fall in October and snap the branches of his favorite flowering trees, bundled children clumsily skate pushing orange traffic cones on a home made rink, angry bees rightfully attack, children duck under bushes and behind trees on warm summer nights, and young women pose nervously and pin corsages in spring. He *has* brought wealth, the kind

that cannot be measured or counted. I have been waiting and hoping for Fred to do his magic; but he's been doing it all along.