

A LORGNETTE, A PARACHUTE

I had been rooting around in the basement for hours. It was dark and damp down there and God knows what manner of animals lived there. I found a bagpipe, a toboggan, a roulette wheel, a movie projector, a blender, a vacuum cleaner, a candelabrum, a croquet set, a branding iron, a Chinese dress, some dental equipment, several lobster traps and a bazooka. We had lived in this house for many years and I had never noticed any of this stuff, not that I spent much time in the basement admittedly. Still, it was eerie, as though a separate life had been going on without us. And perhaps a more interesting life, that's what gets my goat. And I have a strong feeling that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

A perfect example of that wacky real-but-not-real pseudo-colloquial language that I find so attractive and fascinating. And I'm a sucker for a good diving-into-the-wreck poem, or anything even suggesting one. A candelabrum and not a candelabra makes all the difference. So does the word "admittedly" stuck at the end of that sentence. I could look at the list of objects several times a day and never get tired of it. I want the Chinese dress, and its backstory. "Perhaps a more interesting life" is as heartbreaking as the last sentence.

- Diane Wald