

The Past Is Everything

FRAN SCHUMER

Moving is like writing your own obituary
for all those years in that house
or town or marriage or phase
that, thank god, you wriggled out of —
all the bad mothering you did
the lousy friend you were
the bad housekeeper
wretched at decorating
you let your mother buy the new couch
she knew you would never buy anything
that good.

And now she's ailing
the couch hauled off by Joe Junk
your father gone, too.
And oh, the pictures
mostly tossed
because how many minutes of third grade
can you cram into the new two-bedroom?
You text a photograph
of the turanusors (sic) your son drew
he was maybe three
to the young woman he just married.
She says 'Save it. Save all of it.
Send it to me.'
You're relieved, spared the question
of how to safeguard all these treasures

(you understand why Tutankhamun
wanted to be buried with all his junk).
But now you're done.
She wants them.
It makes leaving so much easier.