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Intermission At The Ballet

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One evening, the box was out and Grandfather was able to start a story session when some neighbors dropped in. During the moment of welcoming, I relinquished myself to temptation and stole the box away. I hid it in the soft sandy soil of the garden. Back in the kitchen I found it impossible to spirit away the key while everyone sat visiting.

The next morning, before the family awoke, I took the key from its place and went to the garden. I dug confidently for the box where I had buried it. It wasn't there. I began to dig everywhere but no matter where I dug, no box. I panicked and nearly dug up the entire yard. I found nothing. In the course of my frantic digging I lost the key.

My apprehension was beyond belief. I knew Grandfather would notice the key missing. I knew I would have to face the music when asked about it and I would have to tell the truth, but how I dreaded it.

As time passed Grandfather made no mention of the matter. This bewildered me, for as weeks and months went by, the family teased me to no end about the missing box. Grandfather took no notice of this.

One day long after, while working the fields with him, I confessed to losing the box and key. He looked at me with an understanding smile and told me the box would be mine if I found it. Encouraged by his forgiveness, I asked what was in the box. He only said it would remain a secret until I found it and opened it myself.

His words occupied my mind from time to time but as I grew older there was school, work, dates and a world war to deal with. The matter of the box lost its importance.

During my service in the war, Grandfather died. When I returned to the farm I realized the secret of the little box would never be known to me.

As the years added to my age, I married and moved to a suburb of a large city. My family grew, and we visited the farm often.

On one occasion my son John, five years old, was playing in the front yard. We came out to sit on the porch after supper and noticed him digging in the soft sand of the garden. He was banging a toy shovel against something in the ground. Out of curiosity I walked over and was surprised beyond belief to find Grandfather's box there, with the old brass key in the keyhole.

I brushed away the dirt and picked it up. Its familiarity thrilled me. All the warm memories of my childhood and of my dear Grandfather came flooding back. I remembered his worn old hands as he brought the box to the kitchen, I felt again the warmth and contentment of our simple happy evenings.

The key worked hard in the lock, and I wondered wildly for a moment how the key and the box, lost separately, had come to be united.

After some effort I opened the lock and began to remove the small inner boxes. First the top one, it still contained the old bullet, tarnished medal, blackened spoon and a shriveled and mildewed leather thong. My excitement mounted as I opened the second box. Just as I remembered, it contained a black stone, a tassel, some moldy coins and what was once a feather.

My hands now held the mysterious third box and with a determination built through the years, I opened it.

It was empty. Although I stood alone, I was startled by a chuckle. It was Grandfather's chuckle, I was sure. I felt close to him again and I knew this little box would always remain one of my most precious possessions.

All these years my curiosity had burned with a great desire and now it was satisfied. I felt no disappointment. I was glad the box was empty for anything I might have found in it would not have satisfied me.

Its emptiness was like a drained glass, the drinker having already been satisfied.

Key: Intermission THANKS & DULCIES ANGEL

*Thank you Timmy's angel for watching over him
Whenever he is out of sight risking life and limb
Yes thank you Timmy's angel for "covering your beat"
When he's preoccupied with thoughts while walking down
the street
He not always remembers that cars go speeding by
He's busy kicking pebbles or looking at the sky
From the time he learned to walk and talk, (and especially
learned to climb)
You've always been behind him working over time
There've been collisions on the bike, snake bites on a hike,
So you've really been put to the test
It's time you took a vacation, you sure could use the rest
But don't forget to come back and again perch on his shoulder
I need you for a few more years while we've both growing
older!*

— Shirley Moravec

INTERMISSION AT THE BALLET

*Bodies claim and interpret space
with a potent grace,
reveling in the circumstance
of the evening's performance.*

*Fabric waves give way,
luminescences betray.*

*Intrude
on harmonious interlude.*

*A slab of light,
blatant white,*

*enters uninvited.
Elements ignited*

*severely expose
a consuming repose*

*before torsos unwrap,
wrinkled lap.*

*Breathing becomes normal,
return to formal.*

*Attire properly,
according to visibility.*

*Your movements halt
silence's assault.*

*An island made
of absent serenade.*

*Bashful immobility,
postponed agility*

*until darkness
induces the redress
of a naked stage
by studied personage.
Each to our place
an interruption to efface.*

Kimberly J. Kyp