

“My definition of poetry is that a poem is the artifact or the trace that is left behind and created through the poet’s movement of mind over a problem or a situation.  
**Kiki Petrosino**

Boxed  
by Janie Reynolds

There is a box around me  
you can’t see.  
For me,  
it’s hard and dark.  
For you,  
it is my skin,  
my lips, my eyes,  
my name.

The panes are dull and dim.  
I strain to see what you see.  
I’m cornered within,  
wishing for light,  
peering around,  
for clarity.  
Wanting to want to smile.  
But in here the air is foul.

The walls  
are thickened with thoughts  
and pain  
that other  
people  
seemingly  
don’t  
have boxes.

I s’pose I built the box

out of my fears,  
over the nights  
or inside my dreams.  
Or did my mother  
build it round me?  
Or did I bring it  
from another life?

I have not been  
outside the box.  
Where children laugh  
and youngsters play,  
teenagers kiss  
and hearts feel broken.  
Loved ones marry,  
babies are had.

I've waited for  
my prince on horseback  
to gallop to my box  
and smash it with his sword  
and swoop me out of here  
and whisk me off  
and feed me from his spoon  
and stroke me as I wept  
declare undying love  
and ask me for my hand  
and build a castle  
where we would live  
and I'd eat grapes and sweets  
and ride a fine white mare.

In fact there was a time  
when many people  
tried to break the box  
with pills and sleep,

hospital beds,  
songs round the piano  
an artist's pad  
and box of pastels.  
It was a frightening time.  
The box would twist  
and bow and change,  
speed up then stall and stop.  
It didn't work.  
They weren't a prince.

So now I go  
down to the sea  
within this box  
you'll never see.  
Here's something true,  
I leave to you.  
Here is a poem  
for you to keep.  
Written on paper  
your hands can hold.  
Worded in pen  
your eyes can see.  
This poem's real to you,  
unlike my box.  
Believe the words,  
unlike my box.  
If only you had seen  
this heavy box,  
I might have floated  
instead of drowned.