

The Collector of Boxes

his was small
handmade
an untouched cedar
box, rectangular
with a sliding lid
nothing spectacular
or ostentatious

hidden inside of it
hand carved tiny men
ready to go to war

I'd never seen this box
it was inside his
cherrywood box
brightly shining
polished to perfection
bought at an estate sale

I remember that day
it was raining
but the house was still crowded
people bumping into one another
grumpy Guses grating on each other
the home full of treasures
but the cherry box was
especially delightful
he grabbed it right away
to add to his collection
I encouraged him to buy it
even though I wanted it
for mine

I could tell
he had carved the army himself
they were his style
I heard his voice telling me
about being in Germany
freezing in fresh fallen snow
I imagined him sitting outside
in his rocking chair on his porch
whittling and whistling

I closed the tiny treasure
into the fancy cherry box
and waited for the saltwater

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