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## Rummage Box

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## Rummage Box

### **Cover Page Footnote**

N/A

*Poetry*

## **Rummage Box**

Ann Neuser Lederer

*University of Pittsburgh*

Inside a flat basket lined in red velvet,  
small cloth balls roll.  
No two alike: scraps from old nightgowns,  
strips of rags, frayed baby blankets, outdated ties.

Wadded to begin with, then wound like yarn  
until there is no more.  
Utterly useless, she explains, but the children love them.

I do too -- could hardly wait to start my own.  
People who see them bring her their cast-off fabrics,  
more than she could ever need.

For though she is full of projects, time is running out.  
She explains that too, as she stirs and monitors  
a mess of soon to be peanut brittle, while wearing  
a soft white sweater that matches her hair and pearls.

Most of us have our junk drawers,  
but the half-forgotten frail folk  
stowed in their neat bright corners  
might miss the urge to rummage.

Their fingers might yearn for a handful of seed pods,  
rattling gently like the wind, when lifted.  
Or a bit of sponge, or chalk, or a cushion of pins  
with little colored dots for heads.