

## THE END OF THE ROMANCE

Norah Moore NC

The well-worn wooden box was scuffed  
with scrapes  
and worn away corners.  
Its ochre paint was cracked and chipped.  
But it had a decent clasp  
and hinges that seemed secure.  
I discovered the box in a junk shop.  
I liked the box.  
I thought it had promise.  
I bought it.  
I stripped away the old peeling paint.  
I made it seem new with shiny black lacquer.  
Feeling whimsical,  
over the lacquer,  
I painted on the lid  
the image of an open diary with blank pages,  
a golden key resting by its side.  
I lined the inside with warm woven wool.  
I put treasures into that box:  
A dried-up necklace made from clover.  
The bruised cork from a robust red wine.  
An odd Indian coin purchased in Oxford.  
Lyrics to an honest but lame love song.  
Yet in truth,  
the box was just a cheap thing  
purchased at the scarred counter of a junk shop.  
The box fell apart.  
My treasures fell to the ground with a crash.  
I gathered them up  
And tried to repair them the best I could.  
But they were beyond mending.  
At last, I threw the brittle box away.  
For I had learned this lesson:  
Do not put precious things into a vessel too weak to hold them.