

The Quilt

Sarah Willeford

my earliest memory is The Mother's hands
Her pale, calloused, dexterous hands
 pulled, cut, pinned, and stitched
stitched from the corpses of mismatched, long-dead
cloth And created a miasma of patterns and textures;
that should not blend but do

The Mother gives me to The Girl.
The Girl's hands are small delicate bird-like
things she is, as I, am: new untouched by
bleaching light

for The Girl, I am a rainbow of
possibility a shield from the dark, a
weapon of justice, and castle
stronghold

The Girl becomes The Women
The Women's hands are no longer untouched
calloused, wrinkled yet strong, dependable

for The Women, I am a tool
forgotten in the dark until needed
providing comfort when
remembered

The Woman becomes The Mother
and I am given to The Girl



13 ways of looking at an Altoids tin

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1

The lingering scent of cool peppermint in the stale world of my purse
is created by air leaking out of an Altoids tin Gifted then promptly forgotten

2

it's not working oh, how you want it to work you try, boy howdy, do you try to make it work
you are the only one trying everyone else gave up long ago it's time you gave up too
it's as likely to work as becoming a millionaire painting Altoids tins and selling them on Etsy

3

An Altoids tin is like a Gothic European Cathedral
Decorated with ornate swirls and whorls but hollow; empty
Lacking the substance that filled it and gave it its original purpose

4

His eyes were open but
unseeing corpse empty like
the Altoids tin on the window

5

The forest is dense; oppressive; unending
But I have no fear of straying from the path
The flint in my Altoids tin saves me from the dark

6

If flight is an Altoids tin,
I am the mint
And the endless expanse of Sky, through which I'm passing,
Is the back left pants pocket of a grandfather's pair of Wranglers

7

when she is with me I am full
bursting with color and
excitement but she is not often
with me the door closes the
lock clicks once again I am
alone an empty Altoids tin

8

You're the Poly Pocket in the Altoids tin
 "A bit too old for that outfit, hmm?"
 "Why not try these shoes?"
 "Aren't you embarrassed in *that*?"
Your mother is the child playing god

9

If you ever want to find love look for the boy who
carries his amp in an Altoids tin you won't need
to entertain him he is resourceful and has his
own hobbies

10

we are going on
hour four
it should be quiet, perhaps not peaceful but at least, content It
is not content. The cry of the child is shrill; piercing; ear-
splitting like a banjo made from an Altoids tin and Satan's
shoelaces

11

Bones are not supposed to make that sound.
Nor are they supposed to fold the way yours currently are.
 Looks a bit like an Altoids tin that my cousin Jerrold's fat dog ate once.
You should probably call someone about that.

12

You don't know if you want this
She wants this
How can you say no
You don't want to give her up
The world moves
A forgotten tin of Altoids digs into your back

13

Forgive me
For I can only see the outside of your Altoids tin
And I made an assumption
That the inside of yours looked like the inside of mine

Author Biography

Sarah Willeford (she/her) is a 2023 Graduate of the University of Georgia, in the United States. She attended Leibniz University, in Hannover, Germany, for duration of the 2022-2023 academic year. Sarah holds a bachelor's degree in Linguistics with a special focus in Second Language Acquisition. She also has minors in the German Language and Teaching English to Students of Other Languages. In addition to her linguistic pursuits, Sarah, has a multifaceted skill set that includes literary writing and analysis, public speaking, and relationship building. Sarah is currently pursuing a law degree in the United States.