

Nothing Gold Poembox

Jesica Davis
6 3/4" x 9 1/2" x 1, 2017

THEY USED STONES INSTEAD OF SIGNPOSTS
ALL CAIRNS WILL SOMEDAY FALL





[]

The motivation behind this poembox: I need the satisfaction of – if not finishing a box in one night – then making major progress on it, quickly. That, at least, after too much previous lingering.

This box feels faster, or less complicated than The Developing Box, which had twelve compartments and took six months. Faster from start to relative finish, or abandonment. Appropriate: The two-line poem I chose for this box is about how everything is temporary.

[]

The box's background is my first attempt at collaging, at least as an adult. Both source papers gold in tone.

Gold, a color I have always loved and once considered painting my ceiling. Gold, a color, a shade, a symbol that for four years felt ruined, debased. I still love it but oh, those associations. Time to reclaim.

[]

The stickwand, which originated from testing how to attach selenite on twigs for the Transubstantiation Box, now appears to have found a home in the Nothing Gold Box.

Did I just decide this new box's name? (Yes.)

[]

I want the papered words to rest on edge, like a Serra installation. Waves instead of folds seems the easiest way to keep words ballasted. I'm looking for *easy* right now.

[]

The LTR problem: We read English, the language in which these words are written, left to right.

The direction the paper strips go is mandated by the angle of the stickwand, which can't face the other direction because you must see the selenite shards I glued on last winter. *Look.*

[]

It's the butterfly that comes next. Then I can add the stickwand. The butterfly, one of the wounded ones from my poem *In the Garden*, flying into the words. Chasing them, I guess. Inhaling their death.

A direction is set by the objects around which an object's path has to go. A chain of events, non-linear but successive, iterative, the next item's placement dependent on the thing that came before it. A constant seek of balance. Recalibrate, again.

[]



[]

Today comes in patches, alternating between direct sun and heavy-enough clouds, but every time I have gone outside to spray things with sealant to preserve them

- (
— butterfly carcasses, or should I call them specimens since the Nothing Gold Box is technically a specimen box?
— a stalk piece of something close to wheat
— dried-out flowers
— a seed from Alena
)

the light has been super bright.

Then disappears once I'm back inside.

[]

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

They used stones instead of signposts

all cairns will someday fall

[]

Of course I must age the paper, soak it in tea and time, steeped in palette and theme.

It's call Nothing Gold (~~Can Stay~~), the point is we have begun to decay.

[]

I thought I would go for English Breakfast tea, but have enough Constant Comment left to use. I like this pronouncement that *nothing lasts* to be unwinding, as if from a spool. Running out. That it should smell vaguely sweet, a little cozy, a little dangerous, like cinnamon.

[]

The tea staining helps in two ways: Besides making it less brightbright fresh white paper, the pulp itself is easier to mold when wet. Set it in a curl when it's still damp, like my hair, and when it's dries it will retain shape.

A scroll. Ten of them, enough that one should work. Pre-emptive redundancy.

[]

The words are on the paper's underside. You have to get below the frame to read what it says. Perspective as humility, or something.

[]

I make these poemboxes because they force me to take action, make decisions. I can sit here all day all month all year until I die thinking about what lovely things I want to do with or put in them but none of it matters unless I begin, physically. Hands, get to it. An escape without going anywhere.

Pep talk: It doesn't need to be graceful or overwrought, just get it finished and learn something from the process that I can apply to the next one. I've never taken an art-making class. Just winging it.

[]

I don't like what superglue does to paper. Noted.

I have glued the scrolls. They're not perfect but I am moving forward anyway.

[]

I'm starting to take a more *trust the subconscious and this moment* view of box ingredients. If an item has recently come in to my life I ask whether it belongs in a poembox. How all the significant things, totems and talismans, trash and random stones appear right now: Find a way to situate. *Get to work.*

[]

So close.

I could be finished but I have yet to create a poembox without some component spilling over borders. Something must make its way outside the frame. A secret feather on the back.

A box by its nature has its own boundaries. I, by mine, have the need to break them.

Let's go.

[]



Ingredients:

- Specimen box from RAFT
- Gold tree ring paper
- Picture of rock pile (from Tibet book)
- Plain printer paper
- Constant Comment tea
- Butterfly (its death documented in my poem [“In the Garden”](#))
- Stickwand (twig with selenite)
- Seed from Alena
- Dried flower from tree in Ash Grove Park
- White stones from a terrarium a random person gave me on the street in my old neighborhood
- Dried wheat-like stalk
- Gold disco-style earring I wore at Burning Man that one time I went (2010)
- Quartz that I’ve had since childhood
- Iron pyrite
- Other quartz (from both my old Denver backyard in 2017 and collected from the Painted Desert under a full moon in 1996)
- Mica collected from the Red Centre Desert (near Uluru/Alice Springs, 1998)
- Tibetan bell from a string I bought at my college head shop some time in the late 90's
- Needle
- Gold thread
- Feather
- Hot glue gun glue, Elmer's glue, Superglue

