

The Box - A Poem I Wrote

I am the box that delivered fine wine from Berringer's private reserve to your local liquor store.

I am the box that was discarded and retrieved by you when you moved from your college dorm to your first apartment.

I carried the works of Tolstoy, Aristotle, and a reprint of the Athenian Constitution. I carried Immanuel Kant and John Locke, and the works of Charles Darwin. I am the box whose tape was sliced and folded for its next move, and placed in the mini-storage on top of your childhood dresser and locked away.

I am the box that emerged two years later, expanded and re-taped, with my handwritten notation of "Western Civilization" replaced with the word "linen closet" and filled with sheets and pillow cases that should have been discarded, but for some reason were making their journey to your first home with your new bride.

I am the box that again was placed in limbo, awaiting another opportunity to be repurposed.

I am the box that sat in the garage in lonely isolation, each winter, exposed to the harsh temperatures and each spring, filled with the moisture of the springtime humidity, expanding a bit, but retaining my shape.

I am the box that you chose to once again fill with books, this time, books on "training a dog" and "what to expect when expecting." My linen closet notation being crossed out with the simple label "books" and placed in a U-Haul for a three day journey across the country.

I am the bx that again was folded, this time with some care and placed in the storage cabinet under the stairs. I am the box that you opened to move mementos from your home to your office, and I am the box that was returned to the shelf under the staircase, this time remaining open as you filled me with extra extension wires, screws, new light bulbs awaiting their calling and a small hammer for household repairs. I am the box that

served with dignity, despite my many years, with my previous labels crossed out many times and now and with no current label describing my contents.

I am the box that sits night after night in the darkness holding those things that are not important enough to display in your home, but not so unimportant that they are discarded.

I am the box that will be chosen to in your old age to wear the label "keepsakes", where you will put pictures of your children, an award plaque from the office, your old dog leash and Sabbaca's name tag. I am the box that you will put on the top shelf in your last home, a smaller home. I am the box that you will treasure, because I will be holding that which was most important to you in your final days.

I am the box.

--Dr. Richard Nongard (September 2014)