

Hamlet - Box 14

box · August 17, 2022

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My mother and I shared a love of Shakespeare, while *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is my favourite play, hers was *Hamlet*. I believe she was drawn to the emotional depth of Prince Hamlet and his many soliloquies - a number of which she had memorized.

My introduction to music, the arts, and theatre are all a direct result of my mother's influence. She made certain that these things were deeply embedded in my life for as long as I can remember. Music was constantly playing in our house. We regularly attended Broadway shows, opera's at Lincoln Center and walked through miles of art galleries of every flavor. For these and so many other reasons, I cannot begin to pay a proper tribute to her with a single post about the box I made for her.

The box holds her ashes, which I had to rescue from the depths of my sister's closet, where they were tucked away for so many years after her death in July of 2012. Though she grew up in Iowa, most of her life was spent on the east coast in the quaint little town of Cranford, New Jersey. My mother had great aspirations and dreams that she did not fully realize until she was in her 30's - and that is when she course-corrected to new adventures out east, where she would thrive. Happily, I was a part of those adventures - indeed it was directly responsible for my also relocating to the east coast as soon as I graduated from High School.

Though it could not hold her, she did love rural Iowa and the rolling hills and meadows where my father built a home, and where we were raised. We had an old barn that she loved and where I played as a child. On sunny days, we went on walks and hikes and had picnics in the woods down by the creek nearby an old iron bridge.

I harvested the barnwood I used for this box from an old corn-crib on our property. I think she would love it - it seems apropos. I preserved the grooves and ridges of the wood - very limited sanding - it gives it a nice texture and the box feels good in your hands.

I placed her ashes within, and the box now sits on a bookshelf in my studio, adjacent to a complete selection of Shakespeare's works. Sometimes I open it to let the sunlight in. I miss her every day.

Because I know she would love it - in my travels, I have taken small amounts of her ashes

and spread them in various locations that she used to love.

1. English Village, Cranford, NJ' Â Aug 12, 2023
2. Strawberry Fields, Central Park, NYC, Aug 17, 2023
3. Bellclaire Hotel, 77th Street, Broadway, NYC, Aug 17, 2023
4. Halona Blowhole Lookout, Hawaii (2 locations) May 8, 2024
5. Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 10, 2024

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.