

The Stranger in the Sarcophagus

Haley Arrington

A girl steps through a threshold,
the hair on her neck blooming gently
as she peers through the darkness at the golden
box.

She imagines this place on the day it became a
tomb,
The aroma of incense where
Must and rot now trespass,
The soft murmur of mourning tears and
consoling whispers,
Now mocked by encroaching rainwater,
Announcing its arrival with a steady

Drip

Into the beautiful box.

How it must've shined,
The day it was placed here. The gems that lay

Dormant and dull within its golden face, how
They must have glimmered in the sunlight
As it was carried to this crypt in the
Hands of someone's children,
Someone's lover,
Someone's people.

She looks then to the lonely
Collection of cracked bones,
Gazing back from beneath
Their tarnished armor of eternal rest.
In the empty sockets she sees sadness,
As the

Drip

From above echoes through the hollow
Remains of someone's child,
Someone's lover...

But their people are long gone.

No incense has burned here,
No tears cried or consoling words whispered in
"...thousands of years"
They had all said.

“What’s the point?”

She steps forward and raises a hand
Into the darkness.
Her thoughts return to that day,
The smells and sounds,
This polished box and its gleaming jewels,
The body inside
wrapped in flesh, the sockets filled with eyes
That someone’s children,
Someone’s lover,
Someone’s people
Would remember until the day they too were
buried.

After a moment
She lowers her hand, and smiles
At the colorful flowers,
Now adorning the
Once-forgotten tomb.

She imagines her own grave,
Thousands of years from now,
And says a silent prayer that even then,
When her children,
Her lover,

Her people are gone,
That someone still finds meaning in the fact,
That she is a person today.