

If you were a pirate . . .



IF YOU WERE A PIRATE . . .

Mike Partridge

Anne Sly

Dave Cowell

Mike Matson

Not one of the four contributors to this collection would regard themselves as a poet but each of them enjoys putting words together occasionally. That's how it should be with children.

Mike Partridge is a Primary Co-ordinator with the North West Region of MEP.

Anne Sly is a class teacher at Riverside Primary School, Launceston, Tasmania.

Dave Cowell is an Advisory Teacher for Micros in Primary Education in Devon.

1. Hey Grand!
2. The Search
3. Puzzle Box
4. The True Story Box
5. The Window Box
6. "BOT"
7. Reading List

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FOR TEACHERS ONLY

A deep sigh came from the corner of the box. The owner of this sigh was slumped in a deep, high-backed, easy chair positioned in such a way as to allow the person to view the entrance to the box. Everything in this box was very familiar to the owner of the sigh. The sides of the box had been decorated many years ago. The owner had mellowed. The curtains which had once been pulled into the background. The small amount of light which had crept into the box revealed a thin layer of dust which had been laid over one or two items that could be loosely

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FOR TEACHERS ONLY

A deep sigh came from the corner of the box. The owner of this sigh was slumped in a deep, high-backed, easy chair positioned in such a way as to allow the person to view the entrance to the box. Everything in this box was very familiar to the owner of the sigh. The sides of the box had been decorated many years before but now the colours had mellowed. The curtains which had once seemed bright now blended into the background. The small amount of light which had crept into the box revealed a thin layer of dust which had settled over one or two items that could be loosely classed as furniture. The sigh came again and the owner sank deeper into the chair. Five minutes to go then the sanctuary and safety of the box would be abandoned. The person in the chair glanced up at the clock, sighed once more and stood up. Time to go. Moving to an opening the person stepped from the safe box into a long and narrow box.

This box was different in many ways — it was well lit and openings led off on each side. The person stopped, listened, and looked around. These actions were very important for this was probably the most dangerous box of all. Satisfied that it was safe, satisfied that a marauding band would not attack from the rear, the person moved forward cautiously. Passing the first opening the person listened — nothing came to the straining ears. Moving on the person sensed eyes watching, ears listening, a strange sensation. "Keep moving", the person thought, only two more openings to go.

Arriving at the opening to another box the person stopped, drew in a deep breath, paused and entered. Faint scuffling noises could be heard, other beings inhabited this box. The person looked around noting the positions of the others in the box, moved forward, stopped, turned and faced the creatures.

This had happened so many times before. "Morning children, welcome to your new box."

D.C.



A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step

MY LITTLE BOX OF TREASURES

In the attic of my house I have a little box of treasures. I haven't looked at it for more than twenty years but if I close my eyes I can see what's inside.

There's:

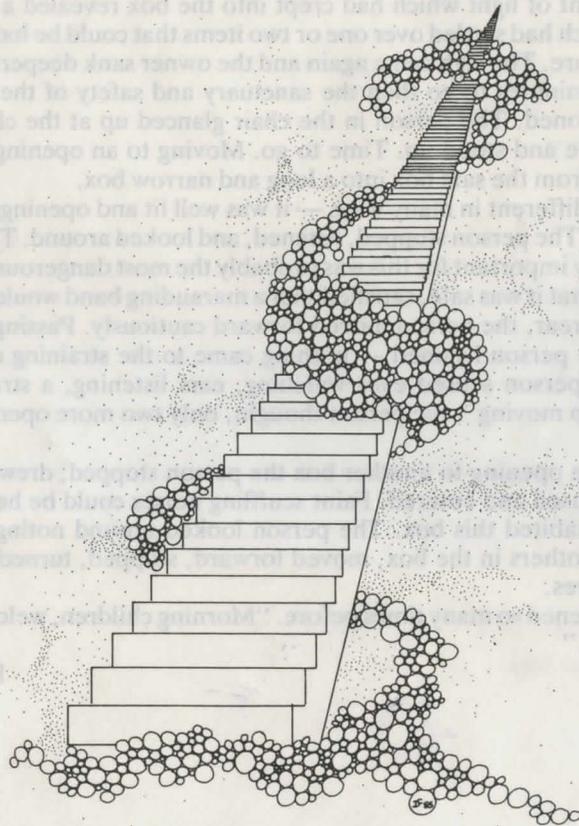
- a school badge
- a Royal Air Force cap
- a blackbird's egg wrapped in cotton wool
- a scrap of handkerchief with a small bloodstain on it
- the valve from a bicycle tyre
- a train ticket
- a very old letter
- and
- something which I'm not going to tell you about.

Do you have a little box of treasures?

What's inside it?

Or is that a secret?

M.M.

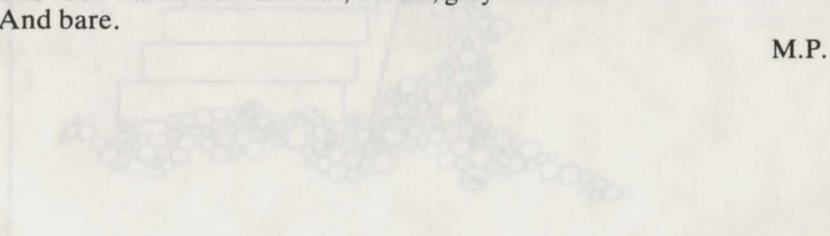


*A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step*

THE FABLE BOX

The rock was smooth and flat, brown, grey and white.
Two cirripedes clung to the rock.
The tide came in.
The tide went out.
The cirripedes didn't speak much.
'It's dull here,' said the smaller cirripede.
The tide came in gulping.
The tide went out sucking.
The other cirripede did not reply.
The tide came in gurgling.
The tide went out swishing.
'If we were on a ship instead of this boring rock we could see the world.'
The tide came in glistening.
The tide went out splashing.
'Are you coming with me?'
'Where?'
Again the tide came in.
Again the tide went out.
'On a ship to see the world.'
'Oh, I don't know I haven't made up my mind yet.'
The tide came in gulping, gurgling, glistening.
The tide went out sucking, swishing, splashing.
'Have you decided yet?'
'Yes.'
The tide came in rushing, roaring, rolling.
And with it came the spiral-shelled gastropod mollusc.
The tide went out rippling, racing, rumbling.
The rock was smooth and flat, brown, grey and white
And bare.

M.P.



*A journey of a thousand miles
may begin with a single step*

DRAW A BOX

Draw a box big,
Draw a box small,
Draw it with handles,
Lid, locks and all.
Fashion a key to keep your things safe.
Make sure you put it in a special place.

What to keep in it
I really can't tell,
But it's mine,
I made it
And I think it's swell!

A.S.

THE LOST FEATHER

Slowly, searching,
Skimming o'er the night marsh,
A lone bird
Wings, languidly flapping,
Eyes, darting, looking.

Was that it?
Eagerly it drops lower —
No!
Only a piece of paper,
Tangled in the reeds.

Up again
Seek again,
Hope again!

It should be easy to find

One
Perfect
Purple feather!

A.S.

SUPERMARKET

Friday evenings we go to the supermarket.
I love it.

Not because I like shopping
but because we put the food into
the biggest, strongest cardboard box
that I can find.

When we get home I even help to put the food away
and then ask, sweetly, can I have the box, please?

They nearly always say yes
Unless we're going camping, moving house
or stripping wallpaper.

And then for an hour or two before bed,
that box becomes the best toy anyone could ever wish for.

If it's been raining I make a boat
and sail around the village
rescuing people stranded on rooftops.

I take them all to the church where
they cling to the steeple and wave goodbye
as a tidal wave carries me away to the ocean
with nothing more than a bar of chocolate,
three old comics and the cat,
if he's in a good mood.

When he's in a bad mood he spoils everything
by jumping onto my bed and pretending to be
the captain of a pirate ship
about to plunder my comics.

If it's been snowing I make an igloo
by turning the box upside down
and cutting a doorway in the side.

Penguin always comes to play then.
One of her eyes fell out years ago but she still
manages to spot hungry polar bears before I do
or find a hole in the ice to catch fish.
(Of course we don't let cat know that we're fishing
or he'd ruin everything.)

If it's been hot I make a mud hut.
Penguin always thinks it's an igloo
so I tell her that her single eye must be getting worse.
I'd like to use dad's tomato plants for a jungle
but he wouldn't understand.

I nearly always get chased by a ferocious lion
but just before it catches me it steps on a cactus
(well, they grow in my jungle)
and gets a big thorn in its paw
so I take it out and the lion becomes my best friend.
Cat gets jealous then and pretends to be asleep.

If it's been foggy I build an inter-galactic explorer
and get lost when I enter a mysterious yellow cloud.
I crash-land on a world where there aren't any grown-ups
but it's not very exciting after a while.

How can you enjoy staying up late
in a world with no bed times?
Or school holidays when there's no school?
And they don't have supermarkets where you can get
big cardboard boxes on Fridays.

M.M.

THE REASONING BOX

I have three treasures guard and keep them:
The first is deep love
The second is imagination
And the third is to dare to be ahead of the world.
Because of deep love one is concerned
Because of imagination one is free
Because of daring to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.

M.P.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

What's in the box? What's in the box?
Is it some cabbages or is it the moon?
Is it a pirate's letter or a sailbird's downy feathers?
Or maybe the world's most enormous balloon?

What's in the box? They all ask me.
Could it be love or music or books or marmalade?
Is it five years worth of homework
Or the biggest birthday cake that's ever been made?

Does anyone ask me, "Hey, when is your birthday?"
"How old are you?" "Do you like me?"
"What's the capital of Xob?"
Or "What can you see?"

No, what's in the box? That's all they care about.
Is it a retro-rocket or a piece of the night?
Is it for real, or just pretend?
Will you share your secret if we guess right?

M.P.

THE WISH BOX

Someone was given a wish box
By the Giving Tree
And with the one wish they wished for two more wishes.
So instead of just one wish, they cleverly had three.
And with each one of these
They simply wished for three more wishes.
Which gave them three old wishes, plus nine new
And with each of these twelve they multiplied by a score.
And then they clapped hands and danced around
And skipped and sang, and then sat down
And wished for more,
And more . . . and more . . . and more.
The wishes multiplied.
Tears flowed from the corners of the lid.
The box cried
Until one Tuesday night when they found wishes stacked mountain high.
And they counted the lot and found that not
A single one was missing.
But the box had gone.
So think now of that someone
And treasure the wishes you hold dear.
For in a world of need
They wasted their wishes on wishing —
And that was greed, indeed!

M.P.

THE BOXING DAY

Most people think Christmas Day is the best day of the year.
But I don't.

I have to wake up early and pretend to be excited by
a tea set from Aunty Jill who thinks I'm still five
a plastic kit of King Kong's cousin from Uncle Jack
a stuff-it-yourself cloth parrot from the lady next door
and a warm woolly vest from Granny Jones.

There's not much you can do with a warm woolly vest
except stuff it in a parrot
(but mum says Granny wouldn't like it).
So I spend all morning serving endless cups of tea
to a plastic monkey
and pretending to be happy.

After dinner is no better.
I get a doll with hair you can brush.
(Trouble is I don't even like combing my own.)
Mum gives me a jig-saw puzzle
which she will love doing.
Dad gives me a train set.
I wonder who it's for.
My other granny hands me three pairs of socks
(the parrot smiles)
and grandad thinks I'll be really pleased with
a sensible pair of shoes.

By bed-time I'm tired out pretending to be excited.
Pretending is fun only when you want to pretend,
like I will the next day.

Most people think Christmas Day is the best day of the year.
But I don't.
The day after Christmas is much better.
I can play with all the empty boxes.

M.M.

THE CHATTERBOX

"Listen to me child — you MUSTN'T do that"
"NO child DON'T do that."
"You SHOULDN'T have done that"
"That's RIDICULOUS . . . that's IMPOSSIBLE"
"Put it over there . . . do as you are TOLD"
"No you CAN'T child"

Dear child listen to the WONT'S and the NEVER SHOULD'S
Then listen to me
Anything can happen, child
Anything can be.

M.P.

THE INVISIBLE BOX

And here we see the invisible box
Lying on the invisible mat
And next to it a bowl of invisible milk
Is being licked by an invisible cat
Oh what a beautiful picture to see
Dear child person will you imagine an invisible scene for me?

M.P.

HEY GRANDAD!

What a rotten day it was. Drip, drip, drip.

You stay indoors, they said.
We don't want muddy boots,
soaking wet coats or
puddles on the floor.

First day of the holidays, an adventure planned:
explore the forest,
catch a spy or
sail the Pacific in a bath tub.

Drip, drip, drip.

Tidy your room, they said.
We don't want dusty shelves,
clothes on the floor or
bed unmade.

What a rotten day it was. Drip, drip, drip.

No going out — I'll get too wet.
No watching television — I'll get square eyes.
No having friends around — we'll make too much noise.

Drip, drip, drip.

What if I was in the desert?
What if this was the first rain for ten years?

I opened the window.
Held out a cup to catch the drips.

Drip, drip, drip.

Not enough water for a thirty sparrow.
Perhaps I wasn't thirsty after all.

How about a desert island?
Look! Pirates are coming.
They want my treasure chest.
I'll bury it here.

Dig, dig, dig.

There, it's buried. I wonder what was inside.
Gold? Silver? Diamonds?

Hey mum!
If you were a pirate and found a treasure chest
what would you hope was inside?

A string of pearls,
a nice pair of ear-rings and
a little fairy to to the washing up.

Hey dad!
If you were a pirate . . .

A bundle of banknotes and
a one-way ticket to the moon, for you!

Hey grandad!

Some books.

Oh grandad! That's silly.

Is it? What would you want then?

I don't know. Do you think I ever will?

M.M.

THE SEARCH

I followed the rainbow to find THE PLACE.

I waited at the rainbows end.

I searched and searched and searched and searched

And searched and searched, and then —

There it was, a cleft in the rock

Beyond — a cave, dark and dank

It's mine, it's mine.

THE PLACE is mine

And in THE PLACE a box.

What do I search for now?

M.P.

PUZZLE BOX

Why is it that if you find

horses in a horse box

tools in a tool box

and music in a music box

you don't find many

windows in a window box?

Why is it that if you find

matches in a match box

coins in a coin box

and ice in an ice box

you don't find many

signals in a signal box?

Why is it that if you find

letters in a letter box

paints in a paint box

and hats in a hat box

there's never any

money in my money box?

M.M.

THE TRUE STORY BOX

A piece of sky broke off today.

It fell through my roof on its downward way.

Into my bowl of oxtail soup — Kerplop! Kersplash! Kerploop!

On one side it was black on the other deep blue.

When flying next to the clouds it looked of paler hue.

But what do you do with a piece of the sky,

That presumably has lost the will to fly?

Do you hand it in to the nearest LOST PROPERTY,

Or keep it to impress friends and family?

Furthermore will the missing piece be needed for repair,

Or does the sky keep growing like hair?

The problem is hard to perceive

For in a broken sky no-one will believe.

But I expect one day soon to hear

That holes have been spotted in the atmosphere.

May I ask you if you've noticed that

The remaining sky is still flat?

Or has it buckled under the strain

Of waiting to be repaired yet again?

A piece of sky broke off today.

Perhaps it just lost it's way.

But may I ask you if you share my view

That both sides of the sky should be blue?

M.P.

THE WINDOW BOX

The magic fool planted diamonds and sapphires and other stones.
And grew himself a garden the likes of which
Had ne'er been seen before.
The fruit of jewels . . .
Flowered brightly, sparkling in the morning dew.
Peach pink pearl berries and cascading grapes of jade
Ripen in sun and shade.
And basking in summer's warm night air
Hanging from the crystal trees there's ruby plums and a golden pear.
A harvest so plentiful it is more than
The fool can carry.
But while he contemplates platinum weeds that are beyond arms' reach
He stops
And dreams . . . about growing . . .

One . . . real . . . peach.

M.P.

"BOT"

I set out on a journey, to where I did not know.
And how was I to travel and which way should I go?
Turn red it said, now enter!
I really must confess,
As my confusion mounted I was really in a mess!

The Place!

Go in . . . terrific, no need for a magic word,
I made my choice and now I have a rusty sword!

Flushed with success I ventured upon my next sortie.
I found a little township called Boxwick-by-the-Sea.
Red signal lets me enter and I see a treasure box.
Using my trusty sword I quickly force the lock.
No pearls and gold and baubles but just one coin I find.
I guess I'd better take it as I have to leave my sword behind.

One by one I try each place that flashes words in red.
And one by one I'm forced away by what the computer said.
Gradually it dawns upon my mind the only place to go
Is back to the PLACE and take something else
the computer tells me so.

So painstakingly I continue on from here to there and yon,
Gathering information to help me keep on keeping on.
A feeling of elation fills me as each missing piece I find.
But, the momentous last achievement still eludes my mind.

A maze, a frog called Henry, a wizard, bad or good?
An axe to make a little boat, which I made in the wood.
I plumb the DEEP to find a rope.
To climb the CRAG and filled with hope,
As numbers 4 flash everywhere,
I travel on but do I dare,
To enter the amazing maze.

My head is spinning in a daze.
At last!

I'm there!

I'm really there!

The ending catches me unaware.
Which one to choose? It fills my brain.
Oh No! wrong one

START AGAIN!!

A.S.

A Miscellany of Literary Treasure

Compiled by Mike Partridge

"When James hid in the Nothing Shop he didn't expect to find anyone there. It was just a shop to hide in for the moment. And he didn't expect to find himself buying a box of nothing, the very best quality nothing (the man said), a bit of the original nothing which was there before the universe began. ("Not much call for it these days," the man said.) . . .

"How old are you then, Sir?"

"Ten and a bit"

"And how old is the universe, would you imagine?"

(Peter Dickinson: A Box of Nothing)

Title / Author / Publisher

World Atlas of Treasure/Derek Wilson/Pan
Missing Treasure Mysteries/Adam Williams/Kingfisher
In Search of Spanish Treasure/Stanley Wignall/David & Charles
Building Wonders of the World/Patricia Bahree/Macdonald
Archaeology/Dennis B. Fradin/Childrens Press (Chicago)
The Seven Wonders of The World/Arthur Nicholls/Studio Vista
Flying Start — Treasure Hunting/C. W. Hill/Purnell Books Ltd
Have a Good Look with Johnny Morris — A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grade Jatte/Johnny Morris/Dobson Books Ltd
Have a Good Look with Johnny Morris — The Tower of Babel/Johnny Morris/ Dobson Books Ltd
A Closer Look at Aztecs/Jill Hughes/Hamish Hamilton
A Closer Look at Minoans/Jane Heath/Hamish Hamilton
Mummies Made in Egypt/Aliko/Bodley Head
Peoples of the Past — The Ancient Chinese/Lai Po Kan/Macdonald Educational
In Search of Lost Worlds — The Lost City of the Incas/David Roberts/Owlet Books
Great Civilizations — Ancient Egypt/Anne Millard/Longmans
Great Civilizations — Ancient Greece/Christopher Fagg/Longmans
New Horizon Library Archaeology/J. Cooke, D. Heidenstam, C. Maynard, T. Rowland — Entwistle/Sampson Low
The Renaissance/Simon Goodenough/Marshall Cavendish

Title / Author / Publisher

Famous Artists and Composers/Jose Maria Miralles/Frederick Warne
Leonardo da Vinci/Lyon Benzimba/Hart Davies
Shakespeare Genius of the Theatre/Jacqueline Henrie/Chambers
Shakespeare and his Theatre/Philippa Stewart/Wayland Publishers
Macdonald First Library — The Theatre/Ruth Thomson/Macdonald Educational
Usborne Pocket Guide to Ancient Rome/Anne Millard/Usborne
Skeletons and Mummies/Josie Karavasil/Dinosaur Publications Ltd
Buried History/Sandie Oram/Macdonald Educational
Famous Writers/Various/Macdonald Educational
The Childrens Story of Music and Painting/Anthea Peppin and Simon Munday/Usborne
Famous Paintings/A. Elizabeth Chase/Macdonald & Co.
The Usborne Story of Painting/Anthea Peppin/Usborne
Starters People — Anna Pavlova/Ruth Thomas/Macdonald Educational
Margot Fonteyn/Anne Sebba/Julie Macrea Books
Macdonald First Library — Ballet and Dance/Ruth Thomson/Macdonald Educational
Ballet & Dance/Richard Austin/Macdonald Educational
Great Masters Van Gogh and His World/Terry Measham/Kingfisher Books
Take an Egg Box/Richard Slade/Faber & Faber
Kitchen Carton Crafts/A. Sattler/World's Work
Carton Craft/Richard Slade/Faber & Faber
Seaside Treasures/H. Tunikowska/Mills & Boon
Holiday Treasures/H. Tunikowska/Mills & Boon
First Models in Cardboard/G. Roland Smith/Dryad
Design with Scrap/Chris Hoggeth/Adam & Charles Black
How to make Robots/Gerry Downes/Studio Vista

I have words to offer wisdom

And pictures to delight

Stores of treasure

And yarns of the good versus evil fight

(Would you like to hear

Of the terrible time

When I bravely fought the —

NO?

All right.)

If you're a dreamer, read on

If you are a dreamer,

A wisher, a hope-er

A fantasizer,

A magic bean buyer

Read on and on and on . . .

Title / Author / Publisher

An Atlas of Fantasy/J. B. Post/Souvenir Press
A Box of Nothing/Peter Dickinson/Victor Gollancz Ltd
The Gift/Peter Dickinson/Victor Gollancz Ltd
The Great Smile Robbery/Roger McGough/Viking Kestrel
The Patchwork Cat/Nicola Bayley & William Mayne/Jonathan Cape
Fog Magic/Julie L. Sauer/Henry Woodfield
Giftwish/G. Dunstan Martin/Allen & Unwin
The Great Book Raid/Christopher Leach/Dent and Sons
A Gift from Winklesea/Helen Cresswell/Puffin
The Indian in the Cupboard/Lynne Reid Banks/J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd
I, Houdini/Lynne Reid Banks/J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd
Thimbles/David Wiseman/Kestrel Books
Elidor/Alan Garner/Collins
The Wierdstone of Brisingamen/Alan Garner/Collins
Benjamin and the Box/Alan Baker/Andre Deutsch
Willy the Wimp/Anthony Browne/Julia MacRea
The Chatterbox/Anne Thwaite/Andre Deutsch
Masquerade/Kit Williams/Jonathan Cape
/Kit Williams/Jonathan Cape
My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes/Eve Sutton/Spindlewood
Dorrie and the Weather-Box/Patricia Coombs/World's Work Ltd
A Dark Dark Tale/Ruth Brown/Anderson Press
Flossie Teacake's Fur Coat/Hunter Davies/The Bodley Head
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe/C. S. Lewis/Collins
Earthfasts/William Mayne/Hamilton
The Secret Garden/Francis Hodgson Burnett/Heinemann
The Phantom Tollbooth/Norton Juster/Collins
A Castle of Bone/Penelope Farmer/Chatto & Windus
The Girl Who Knew Tomorrow/Zoe Sherborne
The Last Straw/Margaret J. Baker/Metheun
Are All the Giants Dead?/Mary Norton/Dent
The Weathermonger/Peter Dickinson/Victor Gollancz
The Wishing People/Nina Beachcroft/Heinemann
The Farthest-Away Mountain/Lynne Reid Banks/Abelard
A Spell of Sleep/Nina Beachcroft/Heinemann

Selected Anthologies of Poetry and Prose

Wordspinners Barry Maybury Oxford
Wordscapes
Thoughtshapes
Images
Thoughtweavers
Bandstand
Bandwagon
Voices 1 — 3 Summerfield Penguin
Junior Voices

