

From "II. Maze of Birth & Death": "*It seems simple enough....*"

It seems simple enough:
sitting there,
gift-wrapped in gold foil paper,
big pull bow
like a red chrysanthemum
right in the center
atop
the box. What's
inside? Something
you've always wanted?
Some thing
you never wanted?
Is it *for* you?
Does it belong to *someone* else?
Does it *matter*
who it belongs to if
it's there
for the taking?

Maybe you're
over-thinking this.
Some would simply
rip the paper from it.
Get into the insides,
conceptual formalities
be damned!

But
there could be consequences.
Really?
How bad could they be?

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Yes, it still sits there,
unopened.
Has it changed
in the interim?
Have the contents resettled
into an unforeseen configuration?
You pass by it every day.
Will it open *itself*? Not likely.
Will it remove itself?
So far...no. What power
does it exert? That it can't be left
to its own devices? That it must
assert its golden seduction,
its red ribbon siren's call?
It fails to move,
though you go about
other things, forget its existence
entirely.
It awaits you. It's speaking your name.
You dream about it. Wake up weeping.
It's got you. You live within it.
It listens to your secrets.

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One day you come to it,
take hold,
& you're tearing off the foil wrapping
without realizing it, like it's taking place in a dream,

pulling the box open
(strangely feeling like you've already done it)
until you realize that *you are* pulling the box open
& there *it is*, it's opened:

a completely vacant box.

Well, that's pretty funny.

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But at least now you have a box.

You can put something in it. Give it to a friend.
You buy a blender because a blender will fit in this box.

Placed, packed inside, you reseal the flaps.

Now for the gift wrap, damaged
in the initial opening.

It takes a lot of considered toil &
re-strategized restarts,
plus a good deal of cellophane tape,
but you get the gold foil paper back on it
& the red ribbon situated with the bow
crowning it.

It looks a little scarred from the effort,
from the history,
but still the gold shine somehow remains
vibrant, the warm glow of yesteryear.

& somehow

now

after all you've been through together,
it shames you to look upon it.

You feel like it cannot be moved.
Or at least, you no longer have the gumption.
A sadness hangs on you,
a solitary frock
in an empty closet
in an abandoned building.

You can't continue.
You turn & walk away.
A thousand miles won't be enough.

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