

Birthday Music

by Juno Verse

It's been stored away in the cedar chest since my mother put it there in the early 60's, well, 1962 to be exact. She was a careful woman, but over these many years the bow has flattened, and the wind-up parts have corroded some from non-use. Oh, the many birthdays it visited--we brought it out with all the other presents, wound it up to let the jaunty "Happy Birthday" tune tick out from the pile of gifts and rub against the frosted cake. We all smiled and cheered to hear it on our special day, never realizing that like the spring-loaded song, life can stop suddenly.

It's not that the life went out of my mother when dad died, but she shifted away from reminders of what used to be. She tucked many things away. Now that she has passed, it is right to have this little package of cheer used again to mark the passing of a year, an age, a time that can never be again. It needs to mark someone's year and all the promise to come, with laughter and song. In her best moments mom would have wanted it that way, and let it move on.

