

Piggy Bank

by Kitty Boots

My grandfather raised guppies. He kept them in Mason jars lined up on the window sill of the narrow row house on Coral Street, in Northeast Philadelphia.

He grew tomato plants in his tiny backyard, building terraces to support more. He fattened-up the bunny my mom and her five brothers received at Easter. It appeared on a platter one evening for dinner. My mom said she couldn't eat it.

Grandpop would travel by train from Philadelphia to visit us after my Grandmom died. We'd pick him up at the train station in Dooms. He always wore a hat and a suit, a cigar sticking out of his mouth.

My brother, Jimmy, and I took him exploring through the cornfields, the woods, and our favorite destination, the creek. We over-turned rocks, caught crayfish, minnows, little suckerfish and darters.

They never lived long after we brought them home, belly-up, swirling in a coffee can. Grandpop said, "You need an aquarium."

Jimmy and I got our piggy banks and sat on my bed. We used butter knives to slide the coins out on the bedspread. We counted, twice. We had a million pennies, enough for an aquarium.

