

Tin of buttons

by [Valerie Wohlfeld](#) in the [May 10, 2017](#) issue

Saved for some new next world,
the double-eyed holes for the thread;
the toggle, the bone and pearl.
On the thick camel coat, the awl once guided the thread.

Packed like a multitude of silvery fish,
the deep dark they inhabit
at the bottom of the box. The flash
of the metal once holding peppermint

bark—lost scent of the mint.
Instead, out of the tin's dents,
the strange summoned guilt in glint
of hard cold buttons, I feel for the dead and the absent.

Hastily mended closure on the lapel: what is saved for the unsaved?—
once-orphaned tortoiseshell and porcelain lowered into the grave.