



My Collection Conundrum

My teacher gave us homework
that has me quite perplexed.
He asked us all to bring to class
something we collect.

It seems that everyone BUT ME
knows just the thing to share.

“My jar of marbles.”

“Arrowheads.”

“My favorite teddy bears.”



I've emptied out my closet.
I've searched beneath my bed.
The random items I've unearthed
don't share a common thread.
I hope my friends and family
can give me some direction.
I'm trying not to panic—
but I need a good collection!

My Mother's Button Box

Shiny ones

of shell and glass.

Pearly circles,

swirls of brass.

Anchors snipped

from navy coats.

Plastic hearts,

wooden boats.

Daisies, paisleys,

bugs, and bows.

Bunnies saved

from baby clothes.

A potpourri

of shapes and hues.

My favorite one?

Too hard to choose!



My Father's Trains

Round and round the crisscrossed lanes,
engines pull my father's trains.

Boxcars, tankers in a row,
circus cars with beasts in tow,
flatcars hauling toys and cranes.

Trailing, one caboose remains,
the last link in this vintage chain,
rumbling past the old depot,

Round and
round

Loop on loop, momentum gains.
Cars whir past like hurricanes.
Signals flash and whistles blow.
I love to watch the dizzy show
when Daddy runs his model trains,

Round and
round



Sissy's Snow Globes

Lacy flakes
whirl and twirl
round towns
and lakes.

Where is that bridge?
That mountain ridge?
That stately statue, too?

They're blurred in a
swirling
snowflake stew.

What a view!

When confetti settles like sprinkles on a cake,
time to make it snow again—
Just tip, and ...



Shake!
Shake!
Shake!

My Brothers and Their Baseball Cards

"I've got an all-star lineup."

"My players are top rate."

"This batter's stats are stellar."

"This catcher's record's great."

"I like your brand-new rookie;
his future's looking bright."

*"Here's a fielder in his prime.
Wanna trade?"*

"I might."

"The legendary pitcher?"

"I'll swap, but for your shortstop, too—
the one that you got signed."

"He's a Hall of Famer.
Now, really, that's a steal..."

*"How 'bout for your vintage card,
the one from Grandpa Pete?"*

"He really threw some heat."

*"Toss in that second baseman,
and then I wouldn't mind."*

*"But I'll throw in that rookie card.
Shake hands?"*

"It's a deal!"



Grandpa's Good Cents

Whenever he spies
a glint of silver
hiding in a sidewalk crack
or
a flash of copper
dropped in the street,
he stops.
He picks it up
and squints
to check the year
and note the mint,
hoping to find
a buffalo nickel,
a Roosevelt dime,
or some other bright prize
to make his set complete.
Gramps always says,
"Keep your eyes open wide—
for the treasure you seek
could be right
at
your
feet."



Granny's Teapots

So prim and proper,
they perch atop cabinets,
adorned in party dresses.
Roses,
pinstripes,
polka dots.
Some tall and thin,
some short and squat.
All pose,
one arm akimbo,
the other pointing high—
waiting,
patient,
while I choose:
Which will host
our tea for two?



Whose Forgotten Treasures?

Stashed in the attic,
a small shadow box
holds rows of old keys
long lost from their locks.

Fashioned of iron
with patterns ornate.
What might they open?
Which cupboard? Which gate?

The latch to a castle
or secret château?
A wardrobe that leads
to a land white with snow?

These keys are enchanting;
yes, I'll admit.
But a treasure for me?
They're not the right fit.



Auntie Kate's Vanity PL8TS

BUCKLUP
DNTBSLW
LUV2ZIP
TIME2GO
CELEBR8
Y B BLU
L8 TER
G8 TER
BCNU



Aunt Nisha's Nature Display

Polished pebbles gleam,
dreaming of the smooth caress
of whispering streams.



A prickly brown pile
of pinecone armadillos
wear sticky sap scales.



Such delicate shells!
Spiral halls hide a surprise:
the deep, roaring sea.



Asher's Aquariums

My cousin keeps amazing fish
and creatures of the sea.

I like to help him feed them
while he tallies them for me.

"It started with **1** guppy

I won at the school fair.

I added **2** pink ramshorn snails;
my fish tank still felt bare.

3 platys joined the party,
peppered orange and black,

and then **4** tiny catfish
that like to hide in back.

(They love the **5** aquatic ferns
that sway so peacefully.)

There goes my molly school of **6**;
they're marbled, did you see?

I had to buy another tank
for **7** sunken ships,

8 tetras, and **9** danios—
watch them dart and dip!

10 cleaner shrimp complete my crew,
but only for today.

One thing I didn't count on—
new babies on the way!"



Meg's Menagerie

When I peek round my friend Meg's room,
this is what I see:

pandas
penguins,
zebras, too—

all looking back at me.

A bookshelf packed with orca whales.

A desktop with dalmatians.

and in a spot of honor—skunks,
her current fascination.

What fuels my friend's affinity?

What brings her such delight?

The reason is unclear to me,
but to Meg

it's **black** and **white**.



Roger's Roosts

Cheer-a-lees, fee-dee-dees,
robins and chickadees
love Roger's birdhouses;
so do the wrens.

Merrily from each tree,
legions of homes swing free,
perfectly sized for his
fine feathered friends.



My Mail Carrier's Cache

The items postman Ray collects
are not at all what I'd expect.
No stamps of fancy birds or ships.
No postcards from exotic trips.
When he pulls mail from his old tote,
he watches faces and takes note.
Ray makes his rounds on time despite
the snow and rain and gloom of night
because, across the well-worn miles,
he's energized by saved-up *smiles*.



Mae's Stock of Clocks

The Rise and Shine Diner—
no bistro is finer.
The menu has quite a selection.

The food is inviting,
but just as exciting,
the owner's alarm-clock collection.

Mae's crammed several cases
with ticktocking faces
that ring with a synchronized chime.

The clocks and the crowd
are a little bit loud,
but our orders are always on time.



The Gist of Collecting

Who gathers flies without disgust?

A **dip-ter-ol-o-gist**.

Who saves and studies lunar dust?

A **sel-en-ol-o-gist**.

Who hunts for footprints fossilized?

Ich-**nol-o-gists**, it's true.

Who seeks out fungi, any size?

My-**col-o-gists** sure do.

Some collectors specialize;
their goals are quite specific.

Ask.

Observe.

Hypothesize.

Their method?

Scientific.



Collecting Stars?

When darkness deepens,
sparks of starlight
dance around the yard.

They beckon,
Come and catch us!
I fill a mason jar
and watch the embers
flash and glow,

but . . .

I know . . .

though it's hard . . .

these specks of light
aren't mine to keep.

So

float

free—

good-bye, stars!



My Treasure Found

I've started a collection!
I know what brings me joy!
Forget about rare heirlooms
or captivating toys.

My treasures aren't from nature.

No pebbles, shells, or twigs.

I haven't salvaged gizmos
or quirky whirligigs.

My medley isn't common,
nor is it very strange.

It isn't something that you count,
sort, or rearrange.

But it can kindle stories
or spark a memory.

Gathered up inside this
book:

my favorite . . .

POETRY!

