

# YELLOW PASTELS

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The wooden box has weakened;  
its clasps hang loose, the corners chipped,  
and the faded musk of pine  
leaves only a flicker of a memory.  
Stained, marked, its contents caressed  
by fingers stolen away too soon.  
Inside, soft pastels lay silently waiting,  
each smear across the lid a tribute,  
each autumn color like the last leaf of Fall,  
slowly blowing across a canvassed surface  
to lay brittle and broken—Summer's shroud.

Your life transcended into those pastels,  
a vibrancy unbleached by illness.  
Fragile fingers cherished brilliant yellows.  
You slipped away, drop by drop,  
like rain splattered across sunset reds.  
As the cancer left you dimpled and scarred,  
white, frothy rapids wound through healthy hills.  
When you no longer had the energy to fly,  
sketches of mallards winged through finger-smudged clouds.  
In a quiet room, greens rustled from the canvas  
as willow branches chimed in a lake-blue wind.

An entire life of dreams is held within this box.  
My thumbs rest on the rusted clasps,  
the closest I can ever come to holding your hand.