



THE MYSTERY

LAUREL SNYDER

A book sits on the bottom shelf,
Under years of dust, in a dim corner,
Holding its breath.

The book is patient. But hungry—
What must be inside me?
It wonders, in its lonely way.

No one has ever opened the book.
No one notices its uncracked spine,
Deep blue cover fading to gray.

I could be anything, thinks the book,
Anything at all. I could be a great queen
In a heavy crown, on the edge of madness,

A small black cat, in search of home,
A dragon, roving the wild skies.
I could be lists or legends,

A map of the night sky. Oh—
there might be worlds inside me,
and I would never know.

Weeks pass. Dust settles into years.
Meanwhile, the children come and go
And go, until one day, a quiet girl passing

Pauses, turns, and crouches down...
Something has caught her eye.
What's this? She reaches

For the book, who shivers at her touch.
And *then* what happens?
The book begins to breathe, to be.

The book *becomes* in that moment.
Curiosity is what happens when we stop
to notice. Curiosity wakes the world.