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The Worst Gift I Ever Got Was a Grave

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Bottiglieri: The Worst Gift I Ever Got Was a Grave

**THE WORST
GIFT I EVER GOT
WAS A GRAVE**



**JAN
BOTTIGLIERI**

They say it's the thought
that counts, but with graves
I say it's the sides.
With stones, it's what's written.

It lies on a piney bump. My grave! Still
in the spot I left it. I was eight,
soft as a bag of kittens.
My mother holds the deed.

Everything that happens underground
is serious: so goes the story
of the water main and willow.
I've seen panic at the anthill,

the dug-up babies like pearly lumps.
If that was me, I'd want thousands, too.
I'd try to save them all
in my tender black jaws.

Dear grave, you have not got
mourners, a maw, me yet.
Most gifts I can't wait to open
but not this.

Not really a plan—it's more of a plot,

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what you never think of at all
until you do: like the mitten
found in spring mud. Its little wave.

JAN
BOTTIGLIERI

GIFT I EVER GOT
WAS A GRAVE

They say it's the thought
that counts, but with grass
I say it's the color
With stones, it's what's written
It lies on a pine stump, the grass still
in the soil I feel it's a little
soft as a bed of flowers
The weather makes the dead
Every thing that happens underground
is written so close the story
of the water runs and writes
has been part of the earth
the dust-up before the earth is made
If that was me, I'd want someone to
I'd try to save them all
in my hands, black ones
They grow, you know, you don't
remember a name, the soil
that's left, I can't wait to open
you and the
You walk a line - it's more of a place