

Rubbish

by
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One rusty gate.
One toaster.
A stack of fence palings,
and an empty paint tin
are on the nature strip
of number 16.

A broken child's car seat,
and two dolls,
one with matted hair.
A bassinette full of plastic shapes
and toys.
A push along walker
with one broken plastic wheel,
are on the nature strip of number 18.

A suitcase with a ripped cover.
Six pairs of runners.
A tennis racket
with no strings.
Two backpacks
and four biscuit tins,
are on the nature strip
of number 20.

Gardening tools and
stacks of plastic flower pots.
Kitchen utensils,
and a
broken microwave.
All lined up neatly on the
nature strip of number 22.

I stop,
look and wonder.
Why has number 24
placed a cardboard box on
their nature strip?
How ridiculous!
A cardboard box
can be put in the recycling bin.

Every household
in my street has a
large collection of rubbish
outside their house.
Except number 24.

I wonder if they don't understand?
Perhaps they've just moved in.
Perhaps they don't speak English.
Perhaps they don't have any rubbish.
Perhaps they have so much
they don't know where to start.

I knock on their door.
Knock.
Knock.
The door opens slowly.
A lady holding a young child
smiles at me.
She asks me what I want.
I point to the cardboard box
on the nature strip.
I feel like words
have flown away.

She says there's rubbish in the box.
I tell her it's empty.
She says that not all rubbish
can be seen.
The box is full of her unkind thoughts
and words.

My brain processes what
the woman has told me.
I go home and find
a cardboard box.