



The Candle (1916)

By Katherine Mansfield

By my bed, on a little round table
The Grandmother placed a candle.
She gave me three kisses telling me they were three dreams
And tucked me in just where I loved being tucked.
Then she went out of the room and the door was shut.
I lay still, waiting for my three dreams to talk
But they were silent.
Suddenly I remember giving her three kisses back.
Perhaps, by mistake, I had given my three little dreams
I sat up in bed.
The room grew – big, O bigger far than a church.
The wardrobe, quite by itself, as big as a house
And the jug on the washstand smiled at me . . .
It was not a friendly smile.
I looked at the basket-chair where my clothes lay folded
The chair gave a creak as though it were listening for something.
Perhaps it was coming alive and going to dress in my clothes.
But the awful thing was the window
I could not think what was outside –
No tree to be seen, I was sure,
No nice little plant or friendly pebbly path.
Why did she pull the blind down every night?
It was better to know.
I crunched my teeth and crept out of bed
I peeped through a slit of the blind
There was nothing at all to be seen
But hundreds of friendly candles all over the sky
In remembrance of frightened children.
I went back to bed . . .
The three dreams started singing a little song.

