THE KEEPER

CINDY FIGUEROA

From the Maine 7th a keeper you were to be,
A world of sea and weather;
a craftsman, bringing beauty to wood.
Now making pine boxes, a keeper you will be.

"The rain pours down in torrents all night."
Weather, like poetry the diary exclaims.
Always first in your writing,
does it hide the pain?
Your cold and building boxes,
just a lighthouse keeper.

"The ball opened up early and continued to rage."
You follow Grant, to the Potomac and Yorktown;
You speak of pickets and the rain.
Far from home building boxes,
just a lighthouse keeper.

"The sun has left her bed and shines with splendor."
Shenandoah Valley and Winchester,
the battles you have seen.
Miranda and your mother write,
no envelopes to reply.
Lonely building boxes,
just a lighthouse keeper.

"Smokey and warm on the march."
For water, the most suffering by man and beast.
Dining on the 4th, dipper of cold water,
flour soup without the beef.
Foraging for corn, you eat,
raw pork and stale bread,
half rations are declared.
Hungry and building boxes,
just a lighthouse keeper.

"A blowy, dusty day."
Tell of what the boxes hold,

shot and shell, grape and canister,
sheapnet, buck and ball,
implements of destruction,
of which the boxes hold.
Grieving building boxes,
just a lighthouse keeper.

" Winds heavy blowing clouds of dust and smoke."
You cross the bones of some poor soldier,
such is the fate of those who go to war.
Two Vermonters shot for deserting,
so much you have seen.
The killed and wounded is a fearful sight,
for a man to look upon.
Your scared and building boxes,
your a keeper of the night.