Wynken, Blynken and What's the Use Anyway

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They gave him a black box for his birthday--
One of those things with lights,
That blinks and winks for one year,
Then stops--
Having done nothing, tried nothing, given nothing,
Highly mechanized, highly organized, decorative, attention-
   getting, and
Completely meaningless.

We watched it for a while in amusement.
"What does it mean?" he said--with just a trace of apprehension.
"Nothing! Nothing at all!" we said.
But someone put in sarcastically,
"It's life. "
We all laughed.
For a minute I thought he was going to cry.
"Isn't there any way of making it good for something?"
"Good for what? It's got no purpose. "
"Then why keep it going? Can't it be stopped?"
"Not unless you break the box. "
"I'm afraid to--
What would happen to me if I broke it?"
They laughed--"Nothing would happen to you. Nothing at all!"
"But that's what I'm afraid of--"
They chuckled, half impatiently. "Talk sense.
It's stupid to break it, and you can't do anything with it
so don't try. "
"Even if I feel I should try?"
A snort "Like to see you try--what do you expect to accomplish?"
He hung his head, frowning.

"Stop brooding and enjoy your party. "
"All right--all right, " he said at last.
They all breathed a sigh of relief and he ate some birthday cake
and played games and had fun and forgot to wonder about the black
   box
Which gave nothing, tried nothing, did nothing
For the rest of its days.

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