Life is made up of little things: some unimportant memories from childhood that, in fact, shaped your character. I lived on Third Avenue in midtown Manhattan during the 1950s-60s where family life was centred around old flats and small stores. Third Avenue was my old neighborhood and it had character. It was filled with working families of Italian, German and Irish origin. The transformation began in the late 1950s and 60s when corporations replaced the old neighborhood. In the early 1960s, the houses were pulled down. Families were forced to move, the small stores went out of business and the old neighborhood was changed forever. And now there is a lack of character in the transformed neighborhood. Life is made up of the little things: some unimportant memories from childhood that, in fact, shaped your character.

"Little Things" is a 19th-century poem by Julia Abigail Fletcher Carney, written in Boston, Massachusetts. Little Things. Little drops of water, Little grains of sand, Make the mighty ocean And the pleasant land. Thus the little minutes, Humble though they be, Make the mighty ages Of eternity. In 1845, when studying phonography in Stephen Pearl Andrews' and Augustus F. Boyle's class, Boston, Carney was asked to give an impromptu exercise on the blackboard. Only ten minutes were allowed, and in that short time she composed the following verse:

When Michel Foucault asked “What is an Author?” in 1969, few anticipated that 40 years later the crucial question for authors, publishers, and academics alike would become “What is a book?” or rather “What will a book be?”. Just as the intellectual climate of the 1960s and the ensuing theoretical tenets of poststructuralism radically questioned the supposedly privileged and stable entity of authorship, digitization and its technological and material reverberations similarly disrupt most of what we take for granted in books. At this point, it seems doubtful that electronic publishing will eradicate the traditional book anytime soon. Enterprise visionaries of the death of print culture might have grasped as much by consulting Wolfgang Riepl's dissertation from 1913, in which he hypothesizes that new media never entirely replace their predecessors. This line of thought has later been eloquently updated and expanded by such media theorists as Marshall McLuhan, David Bolter, and Richard Grusin, whose findings strongly influence the current debate.