

trash bucket

Poetry • Mary Shelley Reid

front seat of a buick lesabre,
hole where the old console used to be.
plastic brown bucket on the floor beside my feet,
nine by nine by nine inches—
nine traces of me spilling out.

one:

coke zero can, half-drunk,
the rest poured out in a parking lot.
it once fell beneath the gas pedal.

two:

sticky note with mom's old grocery list;
coffee, coffee creamer, beer,
three essentials of sanity.

three:

newspaper scrap with my face,
set on the dash to show my grandfather
the day he died.

four:

scribbled lyrics that had moved me;
that day the rain had forced me to pull over,
drops drummed in beat with the radio.

five:

dollar store sunglasses—scratched, faded;
i'd worn them in the drive-thru
so the man couldn't see my eyes.

six:

empty aerosol pepper spray can,
keychain attached to it rusty and brittle;
if i touched it, i could smell it.

seven:

brochure picked up at a gift shop,
'features of the grand canyon,'
paper sharp and pristine.

eight:

copy of a lease, never signed;
it's supposed to be in the boxes in the trunk
to remind me where i am going.

nine:

a faded photo—his face barely there,
but i need to see it to remind me—
this is why i'm running.

front seat of a buick lesabre,
drive and resolve where complacency used to be.
plastic brown bucket on the floor beside my feet;
the things that i've carried around
have become the essence of me.