

Twenty Bucks for a Bus Ticket

Poetry • Hailey Pierce

I keep spare change in a coffee can, a secret of quarters
tucked in a fist-sized hole in the sheetrock of my room.
I paint her walls a fresh layer of baby-blue
to bury the marks of a half-spent, half-lived life.

But she creaks and moans, cleaving silence clean through,
crying out for confessions never made;
moth-coughed curtains and smoke-clouded windows
and spiderwebs of cracks in teacups.

I listen as she sings the song of slammed doors,
of chapstick lips hissing sins into mouths,
snakes for tongues, spitting out poison,
and a single strand of pearls, slipped around splotched necks.

I slip my hand in the hole, count my change twice.
The quarters clash just like cymbals,
and this house echoes a symphony of screams.