

SCENT

They cut her clothes from her,
the scissor's thick blade nosing
beneath her pants cuff, racing
up her leg, cold metal leaving its line
across her stomach.

A paramedic slid the pieces of fabric
from beneath her, careful
not to jostle, while her brain
still bled. Later, someone tucked
her jeans, blouse, and sandals
into a brown paper bag,
and I noticed it slumped against
the baseboard
in our parents' bedroom,
put my face into that crumpled bag
and breathed my sister's
familiar scent — cigarettes,
hair spray, cologne — reliving
her last day, windows down
and hair flying, radio thumping,
the roadside rippling
with tall grass, one fine
apple nestled in her satchel.

From *Tracks* by Lynn McGee (Broadstone Books, 2019)