

SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURES

Prompt 13: Common things – Appreciating everyday stuff around you

I have a vintage tin cracker box on my dresser. The box has traveled with me for over 20 years to the nearly 20 different places I've lived. No one but me has ever opened the box or seen the contents. If anyone ever did see what's inside, they would probably consider it to be a box of trash.

The first thing I put in the box was a ticket stub from the Michael Jackson concert my dad took me to in 7th grade. Now, nearly two decades later, the box is stuffed to the brim with other tiny tokens that remind me of places I went, people I met and things I did. Aside from that concert ticket stub, some of the things in the box are the first friendship bracelet anyone gave me, the first love letter that my first boyfriend sent me, post-it notes that my mom would leave on my bathroom mirror reminding me to do my chores and that she loved me, the first handmade thing I ever purchased, which was a pair of earrings made from pressed flowers, countless ticket stubs from planes, trains and buses, a copy of the receipt from the first time I ever sold a piece of art that I'd made, cocktail napkins with blurry poems written late at night in dark dive bars, a few photographs and a lot of other things that I couldn't bear to let go.

I love how precious something that has little or no monetary value can be to someone. I filled my cracker tin with things like this but I also keep other tiny precious things in other spots like a fortune from Chinese takeout in my wallet or a necklace one of the kids in an art class I taught made me in the drawer in my bedside table. If you have a spot (like my cracker tin) where you keep mementos or little sentimental things, now is the time to open it up. If you don't, you can empty your purse, wallet or junk drawer. The idea for this prompt is to visit and think about your collections of things, whether they're sentimental things or everyday things (like the things in the example from my purse). You can create a collage with hand lettering (like I did) or draw a list of your things with a watercolor background or cut images from a magazine. It's totally up to you to explore and find your own way to create a page in your sketchbook around the idea of things you hold onto and collections.

