

Stacy Mursten

Retail Hell

Instantly assaulted by sound so large,
The electronic static vibrations
Rattling the clothes on hangers
Hung from metal bars,
Like that of a prison,
Burning in eternal flame
Overbearing,
Like the tyrannical lighting
That sees every inch of me,
Everything I strive to conceal
Under layers of makeup,
Like war paint.
And I remember when
This activity of overeager consumerism
Was actually fun.
Three prepubescent girls rush past me,
Each wearing different colored crop tops
Sporting different slogans,
YOLO,
Eye Candy,
Drop Out.
And these are the words
That youth identifies with,
And a red-faced demon,
With deep-set creases,
Much too old,
Who does not appear to be
Anyone's dad,
Passes them by

Eyeing them wistfully,
Like a vulture circling carrion.
I see his illness from afar.
And no one knows
What's age appropriate anymore.
Am I too old
For the Hello Kitty crop top?
Is neon too flashy?
Is everyone fifteen?
Is that why nothing fits?
Is this a shirt or a skirt?
Forever 21.
I feel older every day.

Holographic Girl

How can you see the world
That's constantly flitting past you
With your blue eyes perpetually cast downward,
And your face is always illuminated
By the iridescent glow of technology
Surrounding your head like a halo?
And you're so lit up
But I can't even see you.
And your eyes, when I see them,
Aren't dilated but pixilated,
Completely comprised of
Moving pictures,
Ideas,
People who aren't real,
And none of them know you,
Or care,
Or ever will.
With your blue eyes perpetually cast downward
Upon this window to somewhere else,
Do you ever fear
That you're missing the point?
That you're missing out
On the real world,
On the people who want to know you
On human connection?
Could you please awaken
And live in this realm of reality?
There is so much for you
Here.

Collapse

I come out here and unravel
Blowing out my worries
In wispy strands of smoke
That waver up into the treetops
And hover for a moment
Before disappearing into nothing
And in my altered state
Among the birds and mud and grass,
I imagine things being different --
That every fiber of the human race
Became contorted into something
Else.

I envision the gray and twisted corpses
Reanimating back to life,
Like in those scary movies
Society obsesses over.

And just maybe this preoccupation
With a concept derived from horror
Stems from a deep longing
That perhaps we all share
But remain unaware
Of, things and values to change.
For whether we realize it or not
The world is truly
In a state of collapse.
And just maybe
We all long for
Those lost abandoned things that truly matter
Survival, family, love --
To take precedent over
All the mess and filler
We stuff our lives with,
Like the products we consume
That eventually make us sick.
For when survival is assumed
We lose sight of what's important.

In my short time away
Among the birds and mud and grass
I wish not to return
But stay among the wild
And actually know my place,
Where I'm free and very simple
And priorities no longer hang
Askew