

Beige

by Lynn Beighley

A day came when she bought yards and yards of rich red satin and covered the beige walls of her cubicle with it. Draped it, did not tuck it in, did not follow the straight rigid grooves between the panels. She let it flow, cascading to the floor, where the excess undulated, like ripples in a pool of blood.

Then she bought a plush, white shag rug, covered the floor of her cubicle with it. It was too big, and the edges flowed up the cubicle walls, like snow drifts.

Her chair wheels couldn't roll on the rug. She sat on the floor and scooched under the desk, which she converted into a tent. She bought a lamp that looked like a woman's leg in a fishnet stocking, you know the one, to provide warm, yellow light under her desk.

She quit doing her work entirely, choosing instead to write poetry with an ostrich quill. Between bites of crisp watercress sandwiches and sips of fruity Earl Grey tea, she composed love poems to the guy in the next cube over. She signed each with a kiss from her fire-engine red pursed lipsticked lips.

She cut a heart-shaped hole through the fabric and cardboard of the cubicle wall to deliver the poems to her dearest darling. She rolled and tied each with a red ribbon.

When she was physically hauled out from under her desk by two burly security guards, her Wedgewood cup fell from her hand to the rug. It landed, unbroken, but the weak tea inside stained the otherwise spotless white rug. The guy in the next cube over noticed the stain and missed her.

