

Pentagon City

by Rachel Yoder

I had been in bed for a couple of days and by this I mean sleeping for fifteen or sixteen hours at a time. I don't think that I believed in God anymore. I no longer knew how to stay awake.

That's when Adam came in and said, "Get up, we're going to the mall," and I rolled over. He shook a little bottle, cha cha *cha*, and said, "I'll give you some if you just get up," so I did.

We drove to Pentagon City and outside of Macy's he placed a little blue pill in my hand and I swallowed it without water. He rubbed my butt and we slid over the marble floors and into these stores where all the clothes hung on wooden hangers.

The problem was that I had thrown away most of my clothes by that point. Adam had gone through them and dressed up in a tight skirt and shiny red tube top. He flounced into the living room and spun, then collapsed on the couch with his hands over his face. I knew I was supposed to laugh, so I did. We put everything in white plastic trash bags and then shoved it down the garbage chute in the hallway. It was a very nice apartment building he lived in, with a trash chute. I liked watching the white bags slide away.

I didn't have any clothes is what I'm trying to say, and at Pentagon City Adam sat in the dressing room while I got undressed down to my bra and panties, things that he'd also purchased for me, and he whispered, "Man, I want to fuck you right here," and I thought that we might but I was too shy so he just ran his hands over my thighs. "I could fuck you right here," he said. "Have you ever thought about that?"

He approved the clothes, expensive clothes I couldn't have afforded otherwise, and at the counter he insisted that we get to take the

hangers home, and the sales lady agreed. My eyes were spinning in my head like high-quality drill bits. I thought that I could bore into things. I thought that I was humming in a straight line, that I was making a hole clean through to the center of things. It wasn't like that at all.

We went everywhere, to the lingerie shops where I got more bras and panties, and to the boutiques and to the department stores. We went in and out, in and out, touching hangers and making them click together, our shoes clicking, too, on the rows of tiles. Soft music played around us.

In the department store this guy in a tuxedo played a grand piano that was up on a little stage.

"I could have done that," I said mournfully. "I could have played the piano for a living." Why had I not thought to really practice, to try harder and practice more so that one day I could play the piano in a department store for money?

"Dreams," Adam said, tugging on my arm. I had so many bags in my hands, each one of them full. The guy in the tuxedo had a family, probably, kids. Adam wanted an Orange Julius and to check the movie times and we walked straight to the escalators, and rode down and off and walked and were too late for each and every movie. I was very focused on something, but I didn't know what. I wanted to dust or file documents. We kept riding the escalators.

