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Bed of Pearls

Heidi Koos
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Bed of Pearls

Heidi Koos

We would meet to do it in an abandoned office in an abandoned building that was going to be torn down, I assumed, to build condos. Maybe a hotel. A lot of my friends thought it would become high-income condos because they were going up in all of the downtown suburbs. Maybe the offices would continue to be there and this was rehab work.

It was shaped like a fat V boomerang, fourteen floors high (our room was on the twelfth floor) and the first level was all empty stores. Only one store had its previous, or future, business sign up—Pier One Imports. The windows of the offices were covered with gray plastic sheets that moved in and out, and from the street you could see that someone had punched out eyes and noses and happy, grinning mouths through a few of them. Some of the sheets of plastic had come undone on one or two edges so that they furled and cracked, and the general effect on a windy September day was of a clean, abandoned place that breathed on its own, and watched on its own all of the students and parents and teachers and yuppies, and went largely unnoticed because it had not become yet what it was supposed to be.

It was across from the record store I went to a lot during the first weeks of school. The guys who worked the store said they were probably going to close in the next year or so, but I couldn't tell if that was true or just romanticism. I took my father there when he came to visit me, and he bought a lot of Frank Sinatra kind of stuff, and one Philip Glass, and I ended up not getting anything at all because it was the end of an afternoon spent making small talk and both of us trying to be funny for each other and I was too tired to decide.

I went outside while he was chatting up the girl behind the high counter who stood there like a cop in an old fashioned precinct and kept eating her lunch as if she was the talent of the place and could only be bothered to have conversations like the one my dad was having with her. I smoked a cigarette and really looked at the building and I decided I was going to have sex in there at some point, or get high, or squat with my arm waving through one of the mouths like a tongue.

I made everything that was going to happen.