

Signs For Carpeteria

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I am seventeen

you are the two-faced genie towering over Carpeteria, the flooring emporium. One fat roll cast across your blue shoulders inverts mass into shadow in the parking lot as if Vegas grew its dazzling carpets, stitched and woven, in a fabricated sky. Later, futures will be marked down, clearance by width and thread. Can you hear me up there in strip mall nirvana?

They keep telling me to look for a higher power.

Crank is disappearing my young, electric body.

Each night, you swallow Charleston Boulevard inside your turban.

The sun is beginning to bankrupt your concrete smirk.

One day, your lippy sales-pitch will become outdated,
but your backhanded gaze will persist.

My mother is reading a scrap of directions.

She left work early.

A bead of sweat runs down her neck.

My junkie bones curl beneath the door latch.

I will ignore your fading mystique for two decades.

The way you won't take your eyes off us,
you whiplash my loneliness, guardian me with your grin.

My whole life, you'll never turn your back.

Across from your flying carpets, between *Who's Next Beauty Parlor* and *Touched By a Vixen* makeup studio, Clearview Drug Counseling waits for me. Inside, there's a chair, a stranger, a clock, a urine cup, and a book. In the lobby, there's a tan sofa for my mother, last year's issue of Parade Magazine, a page she will tear out quietly, stealing the recipe for pineapple upside down cake.