

Retail Therapy

She thought about clothes. How they followed her to the gym, work, and evening soirées, their fibers picking up the residue of her life, her nicotine sweat after dancing in a boiler room, the wine she drank so she wouldn't have to make small talk, the hours spent in bed hoping the day would brood just as she did. They breathed beside her, strewn haphazardly on the foot of her bed or the kitchen counter. She wondered if they witnessed the coconut oil her date massaged unto her thighs, which she now poured into a frying pan, if they saw him caress the trench between her ribs and never quite palm her breasts, fearful of their smallness. Had they seen her long-distance lover fall asleep within two seconds of lying in bed while she stayed awake wondering how he could be so unmoved by the fact that they were naked and together, as opposed to clothed and apart? Did they see her staring at the ceiling, wondering if men's emotions could appear and disappear with a woman's body, triggered by object impermanence? Men buttered their bodies on hers but they never really held her, not like fabric, sheathing her from the elements or accompanying her into uncomfortable spaces, refuting the most intimate parts of her and weathering the strain of time, warming her perennially frozen body because temperature is an emotion and nothing else quite fits like the gloves that mold and protect her hands, touching what she's touched, wanting nothing, giving everything.