

## RETAIL THERAPY

i can't afford  
a figure to confide  
my broken spirit  
emotions, subside

i'll purchase some gloves  
to hide my palms  
that grasped to the sink  
in effort to remain calm

new high neck top—  
yes, i'll add to my cart  
to conserve the skin  
that's "coquettish, sweetheart"

a new pair of slacks  
to slip over the knees  
the knees i bent, begging  
to appease

*free verse*

Natalie Ripps | 12

and perhaps a new blouse  
with a pattern that speaks;  
to distract from the blemishes  
scarred across my cheeks

glasses— how fun!  
i don't mind if i do  
the color of your favorite linens  
navy blue

i can't afford  
your patience or compassion  
so i'll wear my damage  
why can't it be fashion? \*

TONE  
DEAF

*photograph*  
Henry Kurtz | 11

