**The Strip Mall Changes Its Mind**

Brittney Corrigan

At first, it took comfort in the scents from Body Beyond:

floral powders and cinnamon lotions mingled in the stuffy dim.

It watched over so many unfooted shoes. Bright dresses called out

in bold prints to suits in the dry cleaner’s rack, still rows of ghosts.

Then the grief set in, the conveyer belt of Sushi Town twisted

like an empty gut. Its capillaries of people gone, quiet at the heart.

Undone, it hardly noticed windows shattering, walls crumbling

as trees limbed their way in. Sunlight on every rain-warped floor.

Missing the humans with their electric bodies, wires and pipes

spilled out between unmoved beams. Tireless beaks bored holes

in everything. But the moss was so soft. It made the unframing

bearable. Signs unlatched, bedded down in tendrilled leaves.

When the fox moved in, birthed two russet kits in a thicketed

shopping cart, wind like a breath, a sigh, rose past the splintered

rafters, the unlit lights. And so it happened: the forgetting. Painless,

its tender reclaiming. Dangling ceiling tiles sloppy with stars.