

DrugMart/RiteAID

I was listlessly browsing the isles
Not quite sure what I was looking for anymore
And I started thinking about how he worked at a convenience store
in a small central Ohio town
And here I was at a convenience store
in a small central Ohio town.
But it's not the same one he worked at
And I couldn't tell if that made me happy or sad
And I started to wonder
if you added up all the many convenience stores
in all the many small central Ohio towns
how many similar stories you'd find
And I started to wonder
how many different versions of him there were
all bitching about the hours they worked
or how awful their pay was
And I started to wonder
how many different versions of me there were
all half-listening
Our lives were like a play being performed all over central Ohio every night
The story was the same and the characters were the same
but the cast members were all different
For all I knew it went on beyond central Ohio
Maybe it was performed across the entire Midwest
Maybe even across the United States
Maybe even across the world
Because, when you get right down to it,
how different are the convenience stores?
Whether it's in Abuja
or Edinburgh
or Mount Gilead
It's always the same small, square building
with the same limited assortment of goods
It's always either a little too brightly lit or a little too dimly lit
There's only ever one open cash register
despite there being multiple employees
Same messed up parking lot
all faded lines and potholes
And, I mean,
when you get right down to it,
how different are the people?
Really, how different are they?
Millions of guys all over the world bitching about how shitty their jobs are
and millions of disinterested girls pretending to listen

—Ruksana Kabealo