

## **Glitter Gulch**

Around 5 o'clock in the morning I walked over to the drug store on Fremont. I wasn't hungry, but I hadn't eaten anything all day. Needed to force something down. No one in the store, the clerk was focused on restocking the condoms and miniature bottles of liquor in the checkout lane. Eventually she noticed me waiting.

"What are you looking for?" she asked.

I held up two granola bars, indicating that I had found what I needed.

"Anything else?"

"That's it."

I peeled the last two dollar bills out from my money clip where there had been a wad of cash a few hours earlier.

The air was brisk but stale. I walked, eating a granola bar, trying to avoid interaction. Bums, streetwalkers, addicts and dealers, and a drunk college kid or two were all who remained. They all wanted something from me.

“Spare a cigarette?”

“Sure.”

I handed one off to the homeless man who had barely pulled his zipper up after taking a piss in a locked doorway.

“Best cigarette in the world,” he told me when he saw the red box.

Half a block down a group of pigeons fought over the remains of a White Castle burger. They scarcely moved as I passed through them on the sidewalk. Wonder if they realized how much they had in common with me and everyone else in this town.