

I usually come downtown to the Financial District to clear my head. I'll sit in Commerce Court in the summer and watch the pigeons groom themselves in the fountain while a teller tans on lunch break. Or on a cooler day, like today, I'll sit in the Dineen at the CIBC building, drink a London Fog, and stare at the Toronto-Dominion Center across the street. I'll think of every beautiful, laboring soul who works there five days a week and calls it everyday life. What was life like before banks? I would love to go there but I think I would come crawling back.

Today, I have my eye on an \$18.00 glass of Rkatsiteli, even though I probably shouldn't. The notes read lime, juniper, and stone fruit, with a long finish and a lingering minerality. I taste the money the winery owes to banks and lenders, the dank must of the cargo container it came in. I taste the sweat of Mother Earth, who struggles to carry us on her back so we can indulge in our flights of fancy and order a glass of wine from Georgia. And I taste the server's stress, who smiled as they placed this glass in front of me but is texting now, with a frown on their face, probably begging their roommate for rent because they can't afford the whole thing again and have gone into overdraft twice this month already.

I worked in an office building once, but these days I get to work on my feet. My new free time feels priceless, but I still tabulate my month's earnings every time I start to get anxious about money. I dream of the big break, the anomalous event that will pull me out of just being able to make it – maybe my tax return this April. I want everything that being rich gives you, but having money usually feels like a cruel punishment – it shows us all the things we think we need, and then only lets us choose one. I pay the bill and leave.

I check my pockets for streetcar change, but they're empty except for my credit card, so I take an Uber home. I pass one thousand people in ten minutes. Through tinted windows, I see the same beautiful souls heading home, trading in their briefcases and high heels for running shoes and Jansport backpacks. They watch me too, because car windows are not one-way mirrors. They can see my flushed and blemished face, my salt-stained coat and my Comme des Garçons wallet with no money in it.