

## The Checkout Girl at Ross Called Me Cute

By Jonathan Claveria

So I used literary criticism to understand why.  
I began with a deconstruction of the construction of  
our meeting, I was buying new boots, she was working her shift,  
Then she said it, that I was 'real cute', but what does cute mean  
in this context, its complex since cuteness tends to contrast,  
It's too vast, we know what cuteness is by what it is not,  
which is a lot, like ugly or unattractive, but still so  
abstractive, and if memory serves things like diction, language,  
and words are interpretative with every thoughtful reading,  
adding uncertainties when it's certainty that I'm needing.  
I thought hard, contemplated how attractive the both us are,  
who is better looking, and if our own attractiveness  
influences perception. Then I realized she is a  
woman, not an object whose value's devalued, unvalued  
by my shallow male standards. It is slander to consider  
her any less than a feminist's blessing, professing our  
encounter as a denunciation of patriarchal notions,  
her motions taking the lead, taking charge, expressing herself,  
her feelings, and sexuality at large, juxtaposing my  
impotence as I attempt to disprove, discharge her outward  
confidence, her flattering words that make me feel insecure.  
I thought of how I shop at Ross for discounted prices, she  
works for discounted wages, meaning our meeting was tied to  
class, status, the alienation from productions produced to  
prolong problematic capitalistic endeavors, to  
sever our worth, seizing the means in which we mean to seize, the  
store, the job that robs her of her worth, her time, tick-tocking the  
day away to where in years she'll wonder why she went, wasted,  
was hasted towards the holler of an almighty dollar,  
until it starts, she feels the need, a call to action against  
corporate greed. While all these concepts check out, makes sense, have post-  
modern truth, none of them explain why she called me 'real cute'.