



ON AND OFF THE AVENUE DUANE READE, WALL STREET

In the old days—like, say, a few weeks ago—you went to a drugstore for drugs and maybe some dental floss. There is plenty of that sort of thing at the spanking-new Walgreens-owned Duane Reade on Wall Street, but there are also upscale groceries, a sushi chef, a juice-and-smoothie bar, Starbucks coffee, and, to serve your less than catastrophic medical needs, a doctor affiliated with Beth Israel Hospital (no face-lifts—I checked). As you enter the twenty-two-thousand-square-foot space, housed in the former Bank of Manhattan Trust, now called the Trump Building (doesn't it figure?), you will be confronted, almost immediately, by the Virtual Greeter, a hologram woman who is supposedly welcoming shoppers, but we'll have to take that on faith since her virtual voice cannot be heard above the din of the flesh-and-blood rabble. Make your way through this emporium of everything until you reach the Look Boutique, Duane Reade's signature beauty center, which, at this branch, is bigger than most old-fashioned drugstores. Here, under airport-terminal-like lighting, you can purchase cosmetics and skin-care products—ranging from budget lines such as Maybelline and Neutrogena to fancier foreign ones like Vichy, La Roche-Posay, and Becca—

and also be fussed over by a variety of pulchritude-minded professionals. The ten-dollar (ten-dollar!) manicure was topnotch, and my enthusiastic manicurist would be the first to agree. (“You’re transformed!” she squealed, looking at my newly polished nails. “It’s ridiculous how good you look! It doesn’t even look like you!”) The free makeover I received was also a step up for me, looks-wise. You can get a hair treatment (\$45-\$60) or a blow-out (\$35-\$45) or perhaps you’d like your skin analyzed by a beauty adviser operating the “Crystalize skin imaging” camera, a machine that looks like a Dust-Buster and is purportedly able to assess the pigmentation, dryness, redness, and texture of your epidermis. There is also a goofy apparatus that allows you to scan the bar codes of cosmetics, and then on a monitor shows you an image of yourself wearing those items (and looking like a drag queen). What’s next? A tailor in Tooth Care? Day care in Paper Products? Shakespeare productions in the Analgesics? “Yesterday we had twenty requests from men for haircuts,” Joe Magnacca, the president of Duane Reade, said. “So, we’ll see.”

—Patricia Marx