

RHONDA

Everybody's ironed. I just got this big worker iron, and the cord hooks to a pole running across the ceiling.

The iron moves along a pole, like this. (she demonstrates) It's as light as moving your hand across a man who's got no chest hairs. The ironing board is by the register, so I run the register, too. Customers bring in their dry cleaning and I count it for them. One pant. Two dresses. A tie. A muff. You know, one of those things you put your hands in?

Customers don't notice me. There's this man who isn't married. He doesn't have a wedding ring, and he's got these eyes. The best eyes I've ever seen. He's come to the shop for years. I know his shirts and his pants. I iron them extra special. I put creases in them, the starch is generous, but he don't care. He never says nothing about it to me. He rushes in with his car keys jingling, and wants his dry cleaning now. His name is Teranova. Don't know his first name 'cause we only ask customers for last names and numbers... phone numbers. I got his number and I called it once. I was gonna see if he wanted to get a drink or something, but I hung up before he answered. He don't know who I am. He comes in at lunch and I talk friendly to him and he looks right through me. "Hurry up, I got me important things to do." But he always comes back. Mostly, the customers don't notice me.

My ironing board faces Colfax and I've done ironing so long, I can watch the street and iron at the same time. I like Colfax Avenue 'cause it's shifting all day. It can be crowded and then nothing. I've even seen weeds blow down the street for a long stretch... like a cowboy western. The bus stop is near my window. Either folks are hot or freezing. I see them in the winter, stamping their feet and blowing on their hands. Come summer, they're quiet like, not moving. It's too hot. There's no middle ground at a bus stop. I should know. I take it enough. Colfax is like slow TV for me.