

Arts de Vivre

Refresh, restore, rejuvenate, advised the book with the pastel mandala on the cover, whose pages were full of neatly printed cursive notes describing methods she had never considered: to listen to spiritual music, moisturize with warm lotion, write a memoir, make ethical decisions. It all seemed easy enough, each one a page long, and she flipped through the quickening gyre of possibilities as gravity descended around the gleaming checkout counter. Self-care was the decree, the industry. Of cares she was full, though of self she knew little. The usual personality tests had been no help—the horoscope and zodiac and Myers-Briggs. The results were in, she had failed them all; she should have been born on a different day, described a different person. It was too late now, the store was closing; she bought the book on credit, she signed her name. Across the street a salon was offering treatment, but what kind it didn't specify. The answer has never appeared to her, though perhaps it will one day on the same page where this prayer is written.