

LET THE MUSIC PLAY THE TUNES

By

Marzia Rahman

I walked out of the door. Out of the house. After six months. Six months in seclusion. Salvation didn't come. Christmas came instead with Santa wearing a mask.

I walked down the road and stood before Café, Le Soir. An outdoor sitting area with some tables on the terrace floor, a few on the roads. Yellow walls. Dark orange doors. A huge lantern hanging overhead.

Under a starry sky, I stood, transfixed, watching the wonderful play of light and shade. The yellow walls and the orange doors and windows looked green sometimes, blue at times. Is it real? Or an illusion?

I choose a corner table and look around. An elderly couple sitting nearby; the husband telling his wife for the third time: *yes, it's a hotel. Hotel, Le Noir*. I thought of correcting him, but I did not. They looked perfectly happy with their imperfect memories.

A child nudged his mother for another brownie. A young couple shared a drink with a single straw.

My gaze traveled far and stopped abruptly at a young man, sitting alone. Looking at me. He smiled a shy smile. I blushed. Oh, no, he stood up. Would he come here?

He joined me; we chatted for hours. People came and left; waiters ran from table to table.

He asked me if I'd like to go for a walk. My gaze shifted to a middle-aged musician, with a violin in his hand. *J'aime ma vie*, his music filled the café and I asked myself: *should I play with my luck again? Or let the music play the tunes?*

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Marzia Rahman is a Bangladeshi fiction writer and translator. Her flashes have appeared in *Borderless Journal*, *The Antonym*, *Five on the Fifth*, *FewerThan500.com*, *Postcard Shorts*, *Paragraph Planet*, *The Voices Project*, *Potato Soup Journal*, *Red Fern Review*, *Six Sentences*, *The Dribble Drabble Review*, *Five Minutes*, *Flash Fiction Festival Four* and *Writing Places Anthology* (UK). Her novella-in-flash *Life on the Edges* was longlisted in the Bath Novella-in-Flash Award Competition in 2018. Her translations have featured in *Six Seasons Review*, *Writing Places Anthology UK*, *The Book of Dhaka*, *The Demoness* and *When the Mango Tree Blossomed*. She is currently working on a novella.