

## **I've Always Hated Lawrence Welk** **Chella Courington**

Sylvia and I aren't dancing. It's not that we don't like to dance or have any physical limitation preventing us from dancing. It's a matter of taste. We don't like to waltz. 1, 2 and 3. 1, 2 and 3. It's annoyingly old-fashioned. Anyway, Sylvia broke up with her boyfriend because she found him nuzzling the nurse with pouty lips and curly red hair. I'm Sylvia's best friend, completely content to watch the ash from my cigarette burn and fall, singeing the pink shag carpet. I generally think men wimps, perhaps good if they can rise to the occasion. But even then, I don't find much pleasure in their bulldozing ways. My dad left for another woman when I was twelve, two weeks before my first period. So my emotional investment in men is kinda small.

"Want another drink?" I ask.

"Not yet," Sylvia says.

Except for the breakup, she usually postpones decisions. When eating out, she always asks the waitress for more time to choose between the chicken salad and club sandwich, questioning whether the sourdough is worth the calories before biting her lower lip. When dressing for work, she pulls out her blue shirtwaist and red skirt then thinks about them over Rice Krispies. We've shared an apartment for three years, and I'm used to her delays. I'm used to Sylvia in a way that makes it impossible to think of not rooming with her.

I love the way she wears her beret on bad hair days, tilting her head and flipping one side of her hair over her shoulder and pulling the other over her breast.

"Oui, Mademoiselle."

I love the way she holds her cigarette, wrist resting on her knee, smoke drifting to the side like a ghost train leaving the station.

I love to watch her sleep. Listen to her talk in her dreams. Sometimes I answer. Sometimes I cry. I think I would kill her if she left.

The band announces the last dance, "Cherish" by The Association. A couple of fellows are looking our way. I kidnap her cigarette, take a drag and crush it. I stand and offer my hand with a slight bow.

As she rises, I smile.

Chella Courington (she/they) is a writer and teacher whose poetry and fiction appear in numerous anthologies and journals including *X-R-A-Y Magazine*, *New World Writing*, and *The*

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