

The High Tenors of Hallelujah

Emny Moghrabi | Short Story

She began to sing while she showered, and I knew things were going to get better. I heard a muffled tone and I thought she was crying again; again, I dashed up the stairs and into the bathroom to hold her, to separate her misery from the onslaught of unheated water, and as I pulled back the curtain she stopped. I saw her eyes light, and fill with warmth, with recognition. I know you. I faltered, and she pulled me into the shower by my jawline. Her dark hair fell in heavy panes around her face, body taunt with the cold. I felt the chill soak through my clothes, and I remember thinking she cannot be human, she cannot be human.

Now every morning the high tenor of “Hallelujah” speaks of a god, and warm spring winds. The tremble in her voice explains that she can’t help falling in love with the cold stream of water, the river flowing, can’t help washing away the night and raising the sun from its place just below the horizon. She could raise the dead and erase their flaws, whose lungs had been filled with toxins, whose minds had been filled with tar. She was sick too, though. Her hands and feet seemed to drag on the worst of days as they clung to the ground, pulling the grass up by its roots and pushing dirt into small heaping piles by her heels. I’ve never met such a gifted and terminal surgeon.