

Violet Hour

by Maggie Sokolik

"Whatcha drinking?" yells a woman from the end of the bar.

I swirl my glass. The sugar flower spins in a lavender eddy. "Violet Hour," I say, more loudly than I'd planned.

"Isn't that the name of the song that's playing?" I squint trying to hear the music coming from the speakers above the door.

"I can't hear it," I say, still swirling. "My name is Violet," I add. I am trying to stop lying. Going without cigarettes has been easier.

She moves to the empty chair next to me. "That's what I've been talking about," she says. She smells like a fried egg.

"What?" I say, catching a bit of lyrics... *And now you're setting upon your chair.*

"Fucking coincidences everywhere, I'm telling you."

"Hmmm... like what?"

"Violet! Violet Hour!" She slams her glass down, sloshing the last of it onto her napkin.

"Aha," I say. "Tell me another."

"Yesterday, I was reading a book on the bus. I looked up and there's the author sitting across from me. Right there, on the bus."

"Like *Leave Her to Heaven*? Did you kill her son?"

"What the hell are you talking about?"

I shrug. "What are you drinking?" I ask, staring at her empty glass. "I'll get you another."

"A margarita."

"Funny. My name is Margarita."

"Oh, fuck you," she says, and grabs her coat from the chair.

"Could I have a scotch and soda?" I ask the bartender, as I toss another quarter in the jukebox.

