

Appointment

by Shelagh Power-Chopra

He went for his usual appointment with Lin, but she wasn't there. Gone off her rocker, said her colleague, Suyin, a catty woman who chewed ginger and specialized in perms. Lin had been cutting his hair for months now, he found her shop one day when his own barber was shut. It was a simple place—hard pink chairs, no magazines and one potted plant. His hair was limp and a mousy brown but she never made him feel bad. She cut his bangs with such precision it was as if she held an imaginary ruler against his forehead. And she didn't talk much, always smiling—once she told him he had good features, you have devil eyes, she said mischievously as she rubbed mousse in his hair. He loved to watch her move—so willowy and ethereal like a living ghost. He often thought of asking her out—they'd go to some little Italian hole in the wall, read Mallarme together and later she'd lie naked on his plaid sofa as she trimmed his moustache. Lin real upset, she run out of here like fire, Suyin said as she clipped away, nicking his neck. He closed his eyes, listened as she sucked the ginger—a waterfall in his ears. Got a phone call, neighbor found her husband hung up in the closet, love of her life, I hear. He stared at the mirror, his hair looked chewed up—severed by a miniature lawnmower. Okay, we done here, Suyin said, holding out her hand for a tip.

