

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Addiction

by Sue Hitchcock

As she walked down the street, she matched her stride to the music in her head. Unfortunately it was in 6/8 time and didn't bounce as a march would have. To make it fit she was breathing the intermediate beats – step, sniff, sniff, - step, puff, puff. She had to restrain herself, when someone was passing.

The music was a Brahms intermezzo she had heard at a ballet performance. She had a piano, though hadn't played regularly since she was fifteen. Nevertheless it was so lovely, she had bought the music and started to learn it. After a few months she had the notes, now she needed to transform it to the sound she had heard. She had reckoned by six months she would have it mastered.

Now it was six months and the intermezzo had mastery of her. She played it every day and longed to get home from work to play it again. The trouble was the tune was impossible to sing or whistle. It hid away within the chords and arpeggios. Sometimes it seemed to be the notes her left thumb played. She hadn't learned enough theory to analyse it and thought her love for it would be enough. So she walked along living the music in her steps and breathing. Her fingers pressed the keys in her imagination. As she reached the crossing, the music reached its climax and she stepped out without looking.

“The light was green!” the driver wailed, as the ambulance crew lifted her onto the stretcher.

When she briefly opened her eyes and said, “I didn't mean to leave you!” she wasn't addressing the driver, but only the sound in her head.