

If I were French

by Susan Y. Hoffman

If I were French, I'd wear a bikini to lunch

at a beach café on the Riviera.

I would stand in line for baguettes and fig tarts,

a bag of sunflowers in hand.

I would talk in seductive undertones

but argue like a volcano.

I would kiss my dog in public.

I would wear oversized white shirts

and skinny blue jeans.

I would smell of jasmine and patchouli

warmed by amber sunlight.

My lovers would text me, “Merde!”, when I forgot

yesterday's hastily arranged rendezvous.

I would stroll under linden trees that had overheard

Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin.

I would drink Beaujolais midday, Pernod late afternoon, and

Perrier Jouet at night (at least, on special occasions).

I would quote Colette with a gesturing Gauloise and

visit galleries showing art no older than I.

I would wear out my sandals marching in protests.

I would use “tu” more than I should but be so

charming not to appear offensive.

I would gobble brie by the mouthful but respectfully

savor Brebis du Pays de Grasse.

I would tuck a lavender sachet under my pillow and

dream on chic linen sheets.

If I were fifty years younger, I'd wear a bikini to lunch

at a beach café on the Riviera.