On This Side of the Wall

The vine had crossed the wall again. Marta stepped onto a stool, shears in hand. She hadn't spoken to her neighbor in three months, ever since they had argued over a leak that turned out to be coming from another house.

Someone on the other side was picking out a zamba on the guitar. He kept stumbling at the same change. Marta knew the passage. She had learned it from her mother in this very courtyard.

When he stopped again, she quietly sang the three notes he was missing. The guitar started over. This time they reached the end together.

Marta stepped off the stool. She set the shears down and used the stem of her mate straw to nudge aside the branch that was blocking her sun.