

Annick

by Marguerite Bouvard

From early June to October she lives
high up in the mountains
on the Chaines des Aravis
above the Col des Annes, with only a few

farms, a cascade of cows fanning
over pastures. She serves meals
in her small restaurant, in an old sweatshirt,
but dressed in smiles as she swishes

from her kitchen to the tables, she who
has worked there for 40 years, beginning
at the age of 13 when her grandfather
owned the farm. The people at the tables

chatter and comment on the ham,
the sharp taste of alcohol made from
gentians. But she carries wisdom
in her solitude, showing us

that it's not the proud who hunger
for recognition, who tout
their elegance and success,
but the importance of caring

for her aged mother who is ill, the brief
flame of life that is for the love
of family and others, seeing the beauty
of a sunset after a heavy rain.