

Stop and Smell the Coffee

Around the time of fourth grade,
At a holiday event,
Two silver vats,
One of cocoa, the other of coffee,
Sat alongside each other
Companionably as salt and pepper shakers
On a table by the festive snacks,
Rows of lemon squares and sprinkle-bedecked cupcakes
Like the sparkling ornaments decorating a Christmas tree,
Inviting me to fill my cup
Though, unbeknownst to me,
Cocoa-seeker that I was,
My cup would soon runneth over
With a delight I'd never tasted,
The mistakenly-chosen beverage,
"Best cocoa ever!"
As I declared,
Practically bouncing off the walls
With yuletide cheer,
The enlivening brightness of coffee
Like starlight on a frozen windowpane of sky
Dancing through my senses
Like the lilting lyrics of carols themselves.

I had loved this glimpse of coffee,
The stirrings of sugar and cream
Like a dream's distant call
So much, that I gave it up,
Queues of mugs I've amassed
Lining shelves,
Or doubling as pencil holders on desks,
Emptied of any elixir.
I never wanted to become attached
To a flavor so intoxicating, warm and sweet
It could never be good for me,
Far too wonderful to be true,
But from afar,
I breathe in the sumptuous notes
Of coffee bean and cacao,
Savoring the comfortable cocoon of a coffee shop,
Where my worries unravel,
Reknit into something like serenity,
Sitting at a table in the middle of a world
Coursing with an unstoppable energy,
So many places to be, no time to talk, to think, to dream,

In this nucleus,
Rechanneled into the stillness of peace,
Acoustic chords humming in my ears
Like the thrum of coffee machines,
The gentle clatter of typing laptop keys
Like the soft clink of bangle bracelets on your arm,
I have found a homey slice of real life,
Familiar, sincere, as from-scratch, hand-made, heart-baked pie,
Where I can untangle my thoughts,
And my creativity can thrive.

So even without a cup of joe in hand,
In this quiet library of chalked menu items,
Coffee drinks and delicacies from the bakery,
To choose from like countless genres of books,
A haven crafted by those who would simply
Like to smell the roses, smell the coffee,
Take a moment to be,
Realizing the beauty
Of what is here,
I am energized,
Bringing back to mind
What it means to be on a higher ground,
To soothe the spirit
And embrace what it is to really be alive.