

Worshipping the Bean at the Golden Cup Café

By Anne J. Fotheringham





The Quest

Parka-clad,
Fur-trimmed,
Wallowing
Like a drunken bear,
Stumbling over
Dirty snow banks
Without finesse,
Heavy-shod feet
Slipping,
Sliding
On ice-covered streets,
Mumbling to myself,
Damning the weather,
Cursing the cold,
Miserable and shivering,
I plod onwards,
A hint of warm,
Coffee-scented air
Teasing my frozen nose.
I raise my head,
Spy my destination
And scuttle, slip, slide
Until I reach Nirvana.
A warm café rescues me
From this Arctic day.



The Siren's Call

You know you want to,
want to open
my frosted glass doors,
push down on the so-called
antique brass handle,
step into my warmth,
and inhale the seductive aroma
of the roasted bean.
You can't resist it,
try as you might.
You take two steps away
only to be jostled by someone
exiting with a paper cup
full of tantalizing elixir.
Step inside.
It waits for you,
brewed with love
by the beautiful barista
who thinks of her lover's caress
as she ladles thick cream
onto steaming cups
and showers them with
shavings of delight.
Take this cup from her,
sit down at the tiny table
meant for two
but barely big enough for one,
Only sipping is permitted.
Let the hot fluid roll
around your mouth,
across your tongue,
awaking every taste bud with its touch.
Sit and enjoy
this little piece of heaven,
this ambrosia we cherish
as we greet each new day.



The Barista's Song

“Sin, sister,
I whisper.
“Go ahead and sin, sister.”
You stand there
in your drab coat,
flat shoes,
a touch of pink at your throat
that belies your holy state.
You finger that purse strap
as if it were a rosary.
Yes, say a prayer, sister.
Come worship
at the altar of The Bean.
Rich, dark,

its essence
surrounds your soul
with hints of vanilla,
cinnamon, promises of chocolate,
steaming milk, lascivious cream.
Sin, sister, sin away.
Indulge in captivating cappuccino,
luscious latte.
Let your tongue
savor the delights
of mocha and spice.
Let your trembling hands
cradle that cup of comfort.
Dip deep with the biscotti
and experience
the melt-in-your-mouth joys
of forbidden food.
Take that step now, sister.
It's your turn.
Don't disappoint me.
Don't waver.”
Silently, you mouth your choice,
then blurt it out:
“French vanilla cappuccino with cream and
chocolate shavings.”
“YES,” I cry.
“Thank you, sister.
Thank you for sinning.
Have a great day.”



Time Stealers

Two precious women,
each unique and yet not so,
sit sipping the fancy elixir
and dishing their friends.
I wish for your designer suits,
your leather shoes,
your Lexus in the parking lot.
I wish for the hours you will take
to sit here while time passes,
time I cannot spare.
I stand here in this lineup,
laden down by purse and briefcase,
sweating in my winter coat,
hoping my armpits won't betray me
if I take my jacket off at work.
The line inches forward
and I am stalled
in front of fancy pastries
that dare me to indulge.
The two ladies in the corner
nibble at biscotti
and chew on their friends' reputations—
fine food for a morning's kaffeeklatsch.
Finally I pay for my coffee
and negotiate the doorway,
balancing coffee and my life
in two inadequate hands.
While I answer phones
and run the photocopier,
those two women
will be running down
the entire female population
of their social set,
While I, who have the need for time,
time to write and do and be,
will be stuck here at this desk.
I shake my head and make a note to self:
“Buy an extra lottery ticket tonight.”



Cold Cups

She sits silently
in front of cold cups,
her coffee long gone,
the light of afternoon
dying outside the window.

She taps away at a laptop,
mindless of the people
passing with their heavy trays.
She will keep her seat until closing,
then go,
who knows where?
Does she walk the street at night?
Does she have a home?
Each day I see her here,
tapping away,
no matter how early I arrive.

Perhaps, one day I will read her book.
She'll be world famous
and I'll regret not getting to know her,
not filling one of those cold cups
with friendship.
Or perhaps, she's just
lonely and shy,
and plays solitaire all day
to make the sadness go away.



Coffee Date

At a coffee shop table,
two people sit,
sipping lattes
between laughter.

“He’s cute, sounds smart.
Maybe he’s be a good date
for the Museum Ball,”
thinks the grey business suit.
Her hand fiddling
with the gold charm dangling from her
throat,
she works hard
to lure him into her web.

“Looks cute,
hope she’s not too smart.
Maybe I’ll get laid,”
thinks the gold shirt and chinos.
Leaning forward,
he works hard
at being sensitive
and a good listener,
hoping to score.



Coffee Shop Showoff

Look at my fancy cell phone,
shiny shoes,
designer leather coat.
I am rich.
I am successful.
I flash my titanium laptop
with its 17-inch super screen.
I shout into my cell phone
and tap the keyboard
of my tablet
with the authority of God
God drives to work in a Honda Civic,
five years old with two holes
in the rear panel.
He's off to his job at the appliance store.
But first, a coffee at the Golden Cup.
He slips into the parking lot
hoping no one
will recognize his face.
Safely parked in the back row,
he scuttles, then strides
and, as he nears the shopping mall door,
in full character he prances inside,
skirts the local bag lady and
her nemesis the security guard,
enters the café
and waits for all to know he is here.
Important in his own eyes,
he interprets others' cold shoulders
as jealousy and smiles to himself.
He reads his *Wall Street Journal*
and sips his double double chocolate latte
allongé a la creme.
Later, he will sweep out,
sneak off to his aging car,
speed down the highway to his job,
and spend his day selling refrigerators
to people like me.



Waiting game

Not wanted in the café,
not suitably dressed,
not part of the trendy crowd,
the old man nurses
a steaming cup.
He fingers through
a foreign newspaper,
its alien language
out of place
in this café.
He waits and sips,
holding his table
against all comers,
ignores the busboy
who wipes his table twice.
Slowly,
the morning crowd thins.
Still he sits,
“waiting for a friend,”
he says.
He orders another cup
of brewed pleasure
and reads,
while the busboys chatter
and the baristas
clean their machines.
He’s been waiting
for a long time.
Every day,
I see him there.
Where is his friend?
I wonder.
The old man turns a page
and sips onward.
I shrug and go my way.
Perhaps his friend
will come tomorrow.



Look out world

The ladies of a certain age
gather at the coffee shop,
bemoan their boring days
with spouses who have retired
to La-Z-Boy heaven.

For these ladies of a certain age
the future holds nothing
but complaints and "what ifs,"
a string of mutters and huge sighs.

I will not accept that.
I have waited for this time,
this new life after career and motherhood.

Do. Act. Seek.
I urge my friends
to put down the coffee cups
and go out to meet the day.

Be very afraid world
The ladies of a certain age
are coming out to play!



Lonely Latte

Warm coffee-scented morning
where whispered newspapers
rustle while the music plays.
Strangers melded
into a tableau—
straight out of tourist brochures—
sip their favorite brew.
Your chair is empty now.
I share this table
with my coffee cup, my pen,
this scrap of paper.
No hand reaches for mine,
no smile greets me.
Another workday,
a mindless voyage
to the weekly pay cheque,
begins as I pay my bill and leave.
I step out,
leave the café's
coffee-scented cocoon,
and shiver
in the sudden chill.
I race to my car
and turn up the heater.
Driving to my office,
my feet are warm, as are my hands.
Inside my chest,
I nurse an iceberg,
Where once fire and passion
carried me through
snowstorms from hell.
And yet, each morning,
I return to The Golden Cup,
same table, same latte,
hoping for a glimpse
of your empty cup.

About Anne J. Fotheringham:



Anne J. Fotheringham is a Montreal-based writer and editor, who has published a children's book, fiction, short stories, poetry and non-fiction.

A career communications professional, she is a graduate of McGill University and Seton Hill University in Pittsburgh.

Check out her website and blog at:
www.ajfotheringham.com