

The End of Coffee

by Tim G. Young

The microwave oven said 'end.' I thought I remembered putting the coffee in there to heat up but had no idea how long ago that was. The 'end' kind of creeped me out. The end of what? Well, I didn't really want to know. And I didn't feel like getting off of my chair so I could open the damn door of the oven to have a look inside. My head was hurting. Instead I looked up at the clock. The time was still there, still moving and still talking to itself like it always does. It makes me angry. I get angry because I feel I'm not a part of the club and I want to belong. As if the seconds passing by are rushing around for you and the man on the street and the construction crew in the back of my building with the goddamn jackhammers but not for me. Stupid seconds. Anyway I changed my mind about not getting up from my chair and slowly opened the door to the microwave to retrieve my coffee. Well, the coffee cup was not in the oven. There was nothing in the oven but a piece of a coffee stained paper towel. Where was my mug?

Isn't it amazing how a situation as simple as a missing coffee mug is able to bite into the life of one's day. I could feel the teeth sinking in, gnawing into my head. I stood straight up from my crouch in front of the oven and quickly glanced over the landscape of my writing table because I was certain the mug would be sitting there with a tiny trail of steam floating ever so perfectly above my valued friend of a beverage and I would laugh and all would be right in the world. However I had to turn my quick glance into a slow scroll. My mug was not to be seen on the table. I cursed at myself, turned on my heel and marched into the kitchen to the counter which is where I knew for certain my joe was waiting for me. The counter was naked.

I thought back to my first movements out of bed. Maybe I had never even bothered to prepare the cup to begin with. This was a definite

possibility since I never fell into bed until about five this morning from a night of tall pints and short shots of Jameson. But wouldn't then coffee be the very first thought in my head as my eyes cracked into the dreaded light once more? It had to be true. Unless the first thought was to grab the bottle of aspirin and a huge glass of water to take the repulsive dryness from my mouth and alleviate the pain in my brain. But the coffee train would have immediately followed that and so far I have seen nothing in the way of my blessed brew. I remembered having a heated discussion about something I couldn't remember. Obviously I am not thinking clear. I am getting twisted like a cruller into the mess I have made of this morning and I am stretching the meaning of morning to way past its boundaries. My clock, of which has never even considered inviting me to join its fraternity, has the fucking nerve to inform me that time is two. Two in the afternoon because the sun is peeping through my closed blinds. Blind becoming a key word. I can't find my coffee, am not even sure I had any, can't seem to recall anything and suddenly I must sit down remove my glasses and rub my eyes. They are itching like crazy. I feel the sleepers in the corners and they feel like rocks. I need to go splash my face and brush my teeth and maybe then I might begin to start this morning from hell all over again.

I turn around in my chair and look back at my empty bed. I'm thinking I should go back, crawl under my blankets and pretend I have not yet removed myself from such a nest. I do. It feels like I have accomplished the finest thing I could have possibly accomplished today. I turn my eyes away from the snob of a clock and shut them. I stretch out my legs and curl my toes. I almost expect them to discover my coffee filled cup at the end of my bed where my feet spill the hot sauce onto my tender dogs and I have to jump up back out of bed barking like a wild animal. Nothing happens. I open my eyes, peer down at my feet and see no mug, my toes free from scars. My headache begins to wake up even more than I have. I jump out of bed and hurt my left big toe on my shoe which I forgot to shove under the bed early this morning. I jump

back into the rack.

Now I decide to lift my bones ever so delicately from my sleeping chamber. I am quiet as a cockroach. I sneak into the kitchen. If the grill on the stove is still warm or maybe even hot that would mean I had heated the water for coffee. I wet the tip of my finger from my mouth and assume the worst, that being the burner is still very hot, and quickly touch the metal then retreat my finger. The burner is cold. My finger is wet. Just for kicks I open the fridge. For reasons unknown to me the vibrations of the fridge, I guess, knock the clock off the wall and I see it smash to the floor. The battery pops out. I see the second hand has stopped moving and feel like I have won a battle, earned a prize. It's then for the very first time of the day I feel my face crack into a grin and maybe the aspirin are beginning to kick in. I look carefully into the refrigerator. Son of a bitch.

