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Cup of Tea

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Cup of Tea

by Paula Garcia

“Such a beautiful photograph,” she marvels

As she sits down where I used to lie.

You look at the picture as she asks you who I am.

For what seems like an eternity in your mind

You plead with God to help you mask the clouds

That are now thundering about in your head.

“Just an old friend,” you reply coolly,

After an uncomfortable second.

You offer her coffee and ask if she’d prefer tea

“Coffee is great,” she chimes.

“Make yourself comfortable,” you insist.

You enter the kitchen, scramble for the cups,

And twist open the can.

“How could I have left that lying around?” you ask yourself,

As you then realize that you’ve missed the cup

And spilled all around.

You frantically wipe the counter clean as if you were

Clearing the slate of your own conscience.

“I must have missed it while I was packing.”

You stir the mugs for the final time

Once for luck, and another just for the hell of it.

Excitedly you exclaim, “Here we go! One for you and one for me.”

You prop down next to her, shifting your body to a position of comfort.

Just when you were ready to let the evening simmer down

She attempts to take a sip from the cup then looks up at you timidly

Braving a confused smile.

You ask in concern, “Something wrong?”

She replies, “Oh, no, everything is all right.

Ran out of coffee tonight, huh?”

You look at her confused, wondering what she meant.

She hands the mug back to you and, embarrassed,

You generously give her yours.

Apologizing swiftly, you excuse yourself to the kitchen once again.

Frazzled.

Looking down at the cup of coffee, you realize, wasn’t coffee after all.

It was tea—

Perfectly prepared with two cubes of sugar—

Just the way you knew I liked it.