

FOUND LETTER FROM THE CUTE BARISTA GIRL TO THE MALE POET
by Cynthia French

I found your poem.
That one you performed at the poetry slam.
That you posted to YouTube.
That your friends tagged me in on Facebook.
That you left inconspicuously on the table
under the tea service you neglected to bus
despite the signs posted everywhere
asking patrons to "please bus your own dishes."

I guess you wanted me to find it
but weren't ballsy enough to just
hand it to me yourself.

You know the one,
pretty much the same as all the poems
all the other poet boys have written
to all the other cute barista girls
since the dawn of time. Or at least
since the dawn of espresso machines
and cute barista girls.

But yours was *different*.

The way you captured my cuteness
with the word "cute," and nailed the color
of my eyes with the adjective "espresso-colored."
How original you are poet boy!
Just like a skim vanilla latte, you are.

You should know skim vanilla lattes are not original.
I make at least twenty-seven of them every shift.
Skim milk has no body to it. It's pretty much water.
So you're kind of like a watered-down,
artificially sweetened cup of coffee.

How's that metaphor-ya?

Also, my eyes aren't brown.
And I've never seen a hazel espresso bean.
And calling me cute isn't cute.
Puppies are cute. Me, I'm fierce.
I'm more avalanche than baby chihuahua,
More dangerous than a pitbull,
Snottier than a pug, and, in case you hadn't noticed,
I walk on two legs.

I did not put vanilla in your mocha because
I must have *sensed you liked it that way*.
That shit was not fate.
It's our secret recipe.
And I'll probably get fired for telling you.

I know having your order memorized
makes you feel special,
but I have everyone's order memorized.
It's kind of like ... my job.
Which is what this is. A job.

I don't come to the library
Or the cubical at your temp job
Or your mother's basement
to spy on you
while you're "working on your poetry."

I am not waiting for the day
you finally get up the courage
to tell me you think I'm cute.
I'm waiting for the day you might
tip me more than a quarter.

Seriously, this poor poet thing is played out.

I know how much you spend
on coffee and muffins and soup each week.
Buy a can of Campbell's
and leave me a dollar next time.

Then maybe I'll notice you
or something.

But probably not.

I got my eye on the androgynous punk
behind the deli counter down the street.
I like the way they cut my meat.

It's *real* cute.