

On Two Years of Volunteering Mornings at a Coffee Table in Bartlett Hall

Yes, the donuts are fresh
because I carried them up from the bakery
at seven-thirty
while you were sleeping.

No, the creamer is not anthrax
even though it's white and powdered.

Don't worry, I brewed the coffee myself
at eight o'clock
so it hasn't been sitting too long for you,
no matter how often you ask if it's from yesterday
and wrinkle your nose.

Actually, I'm not feeling too well today,
but thank you for asking.
I'm tired, and I could use a day off,
but don't panic;
I'll still be here when you need caffeine tomorrow.

I was admitted to this University based solely on my ability to
count change
organize donuts
and measure level scoops of
ground coffee.

There are professors who think
my name is Coffee Lady.

My identity is served on a platter among 50-cent donuts,
handed to you in change,
and scooped out by 1/8 cup increments
into boiling water
until my English major has been diluted into every 8 ounce cup of Hazelnut
or French Vanilla
that warms your hands
or steams up your glasses
as you walk to class.

-Leah B. Makuch