

Anniversary

by David Aichenbaum

He honestly could care less. We should converse, you and I, he says. All right, she says. She lays down the baster in her drawn out way, heel to toe on the countertop, one step in a long line. Some turkey junk dribbles out. He slurps it up. Disgusting, she says. But first let's go to Borders, he says. Who'll watch it, she says. That really doesn't matter, he says.

He orders the equivalent of a Caramel Frappuchino and for her English Breakfast. Great, she says, we're here. Let's just drink for a while, he says. He's done in no time because that's how he just drinks. He has to pee. We'll converse after that, he says. Fine, she says. Peeing doesn't last long. Believe it or not, I'm back, he says.

She stirs her tea.

The caffeine starts messing with his system. He hates sitting. The twitching kicks in. His right leg, for instance, sentenced to jitterbug, one of those endless fairy tale curses. Then his left.

Serious tremors. Lower extremities off their rocker.

You can't hold on to anything, she says. I mean nothing.

Who makes a turkey anyway, he says.

Glass shattering behind the counter. A dish rack gone down. Smashed to smithereens. The barista guy runs around with his hand in his mouth. Hey, people are saying. Crowding. Hey, hey there. Everything all right?

You hate Borders, she says. I know you do. Still stirring. Won't look up.

It's an okay place, he says. He may be thirsty again. It's hard to tell.

He hates middles too.

He has never learned.

He'll get another once the barista guy quits bleeding.

