

Notebook (excerpt)

by Jill Chan

Sometimes I wonder where this writing started. This love of the solitary world. For writing is solitary, touching the endless extremes of loneliness and ecstasy. When I write, it is as if I'm free to be alone, to be indefinite and conscious.

Looking at the cup of coffee in front of you, you hold it like a person in love with desire. Something in you matches this outward stance of wrapping your hands around the cup. And I stand up, holding my own cup. I walk to the sink, turn on the tap, and wash the cup. First inside, then outside it. I bring the cup back to the table and sit down again.

Through all this, I am writing. And I am doing everything in the scene as if I am actually in front of you or you are in front of me, and we are each there, surprising the world with our presence.

It is this magic, this transformation of scene and imagination which holds me captive. I have no right to fool anyone but myself. I try as much as I can to write but only in as much as you believe—am I successful. In as much as you are made to think—am I successful. In as much as you are compelled to feel—am I successful.

But it is not me who is successful but the writer in me. The one who nudges you into thinking, losing, finding. The one who believes along with you. The one who wants to fool no one but you.

And you are right to say, *I believe*. And I am right to say, *I believe only as much as you want me to*.

And we are both believers in the art of writing.

~

