

## The coffee barista's experiment

1) In the 20th hour the spider plant waved at Shelly. It was in that instant that you glimpse the outside world before the bathroom door latches shut. As she eased down her zipper the image blazed....

2) In the 27th hour Shelly imagined the city built of sugar cubes. As she mixed chocolate syrup into the 14th mocha of her marathon shift, she pictured the bank, the pet store, the police station, video store... the entire city made of sugar cubes. If it rains, she thought, we will all taste sweet freedom.

3) The roosters were not a surprise. Already, dolphins had ordered raspberry scones. An enormous cockroach munched coffee grounds until its belly distended, pulled taut and round. The roosters were too loud, though. Their talons scratched and clicked, beaks cutting through biscotti with an unsettling snap. They ordered round after round of black coffee, eyeing Shelly with suspicion that turned bitter, increasingly ominous. It had been 47 hours of work, no sleep, and countless cups of coffee passed across the wooden countertop.

4) The roosters slurped their coffee: Shelly put hands over her ears, hummed to herself, turned up the music to shut out the noise. It was almost dawn. She couldn't bear to think of what might happen next.

