

## Good Morning Sunshine

“Good morning, Sunshine” I shouted in a voice two octaves higher than my normal voice. Shouting was the only way to be heard over the packed crowd at the neighborhood coffee shop known as “Mugs” in downtown Cleveland. I was determined to have this beautiful woman, with golden blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes, that were like beams of sunlight rising in the early morning over the calm ocean, and who had the most beautiful, enticing smile that I had ever seen, recognize me as I stood behind the counter so she would finally stand in my line.

Every morning for the last week around eight A.M. this gorgeous creature, who had to have been sent from the heavens above, came into the store but had never stood in my line. I was infatuated and desperately wanted to meet this goddess. Granted there were five other lines of morning coffee drinkers spread throughout the store, but I wanted my chance to wait on her and possibly start a conversation. Even though I am a shy, quiet, self-effacing type of guy this morning was different, almost cathartic. When I awoke to a crystal-clear radiant sun-drenched turquoise sky a shot of courage spread quickly through my body and suddenly my confidence, my self-esteem soared. I felt energized, like the bunny, and knew exactly what my course of action would be on this magical morning.

Please, I prayed, do not allow the feeling of failure, of disappointment to invade my psyche again. As I started my eight-year-old slightly dented Honda Civic to begin my drive to work my anxiety level rose precipitously and I began to perspire profusely. The feeling of invincibility that I experienced upon awaking this morning was slowly dissipating into doubt. Doubts about my worth infiltrate my mind. Sunshine had not stood in my line, I surmised, because the other two male baristas were exceedingly more pleasing to the

eye. Maybe I should remain silent, go about my responsibilities and pine quietly to myself. I am a loser and always will be a loser. The unpleasant memories of my senior prom and how utterly humiliated I felt hit me like a slap across my face. Both Mary Beth and Barbara, neither one a raging beauty, turned my “would you be my date” down without even blinking an eye or their heart. Both gave me a strongly worded response, one single punch-to-the-gut-word, “No”! So, on the night of the senior prom, I played with my imaginary friend on X-Box. As I pulled into the garage directly across the street from “Mugs” I finally made a conscious decision. I am not going to embarrass myself and attempt to reach out to this beautiful woman.

Now possessing a defeatist attitude, I cross the street and to my amazement lying on the sidewalk is a crisp new twenty-dollar bill. Wow, maybe my luck has changed. I am going to hide my fears and meet this enchanted princess.

Precisely at eight A.M. my Sunshine enters the coffee shop and I yell “Good morning, Sunshine”. No response from my infatuation. My obsession does not even bother to look up from her smart phone where she is totally engrossed. A few women do look my way, but not my beauty. My stomach is performing somersaults and I am sweating while attempting to give the image of being calm and collected but most of all cool. I fool no one, including myself. But I come too far to abandon the task and like Don Quixote I am determined not to fail.

I yell even louder in a voice outside my body, “Good morning, Sunshine”. Please my idol, acknowledge my greeting and smile. Every other woman in the coffee shop raises her head, looks directly at me and smiles, except for the special lady for whom my act of courage, with a ton of trepidation, was meant. My passion looks at me, with terrifying laser

beam eyes, in utter disgust and feigned nausea like she had discovered a dead cockroach on her pillow.

Those old feelings of worthlessness and self-effacing come rushing back. My heart which held such promise is crushed and reduced to ashes. I am totally devastated as I try to hold back a wall of tears. The desire to quit, to leave and run away is tempting but I must work. I give the smartly dressed man standing in front of the line his vanilla latte and take the next customer's request- a cinnamon roll Frappuccino blended coffee. I look up to see my sunshine walk out the door. I am a loser and always will be a loser.