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Eat at Joe's

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EAT AT JOE'S

KC Esper

Here, there are ten ways to cook an egg,
but today I chose over-easy.
From behind the counter,
she counts the minutes of her shift with drips of coffee,
and asks if I need a refill.

Different mornings draw different crowds.
At 5 am, the grill warms and waits for the orders
of retired golfers and tired students,
who pay a small price for big meals—
cash only.

Rye toast dipped in velvet yolk,
regular coffee, no sugar, two creams,
bacon, hash browns, and “Can I have just one
chocolate chip pancake, please?”
Thank you.

A man in the corner reads a newspaper,
and remembers how his wife liked her French toast—
no syrup, but plenty of jam.
Watching a young couple smile over lukewarm coffee,
he could still feel the energy in her tired gaze.

Among the music of a busy kitchen,
Joe himself flips pancakes,
nodding politely at his fans,
who, last night, fell asleep as strangers,
but awoke as family.

A rising sun peaks through the window
and warms my bare arms.
I thank caffeine for curing my yawns,
and wonder if there has ever been
a more beautiful morning.