

Sip Life Slowly

BY BETSIE RAYNER

Drank a mojito with dinner.
Girlfriend threw her hair over her shoulder and laughed.
She leaves for Italy in a week,
so I drank a mojito.
Mint, lemon, tart, refreshing;
saying goodbye for a damn good reason.

The mint-awakens my memory of stilettos on cobblestone lanes,
mosaics inlaid on the floor beneath
paintings on domed ceilings of history reaching for the heavens,
monks' songs echoing between Tuscan hills
from an eight hundred year-old church
where Cyprus trees are the tallest sky scrapers.

The lemon-a Sieneese custard cake perfuming my Italian kitchen.

The tart-three months passed all too quickly,
and I sealed my fate to return
from a sweaty internet cafe in Pompeii
where I registered for winter term classes back at school.
What was real is now a photo in an album.

The refreshing-my soul is forever stained burnt sienna,
I just have to slow down and
close my eyes to see it;
drink a mojito.

Clear sky outside the restaurant-bar.
Stars in Seattle scream for recognition.
Should be studying.

Why?

I've worked so hard all winter term.

It's finals.

I'm supposed to drink coffee, Mountain Dew and eat popcorn
to keep the cogs turning,
keep the numbers cranking.

Learn!

Must prove...?

I'm not sure anymore.

Went to class everyday,

let the professor's wisdom sink in,

racked my brain to understand why we fought the civil war,
and I was supposed to drink coffee and Mountain Dew
last night to prove my understanding
during a palm sweaty final at 8:30 this morning.

I drank a mojito.

I ate my dinner slowly.

I studied for five hours,
slept for four.

Pen scribbling, finished.

I finished.

The cherry trees are blossoming on campus.

A young man spreads his notes across the grass beneath a
cherry tree

and invites the sun to his chemistry picnic.

It's spring.

I'm gonna go home.

I don't want to drink coffee and Mountain Dew and eat popcorn.

Well, maybe popcorn,
but I want to eat it slowly.

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