The first time I drank Turkish coffee,  
I sat in a castle by the Nile.  
A blue fountain misted the room, moist heat, as I mourned my uncle’s death.

I sat in a castle by the Nile,  
thick coffee grounds stunning my mouth, a sudden heat, as I mourned my uncle’s death,  
trying not to spit, gulping the un gulpable.

Thick coffee grounds stunned my mouth,  
I wondered why people drank this stuff,  
trying not to spit, gulping the un gulpable,  
heavy silt like muddied banks of the Nile.

I wondered why people drank this stuff,  
perhaps for the way coffee settles at the bottom —heavy silt like muddied banks of the Nile—  
and how one’s fortune shows through the cracks.

Perhaps for the way coffee settles at the bottom,  
weird crossed streaks, scribbled names of saints,  
and how one’s fortune shows through the cracks,  
mysterious harbingers of fate.

Weird crossed streaks, scribbled names of saints;  
Bless the coffee-drinker, the seer-reader says,  
and how one’s fortune shows through the cracks,  
beware the webbed finger of fate.

Bless the coffee-drinker, the seer-reader says,  
but I’m easily spooked and don’t want to  
beware the webbed finger of fate.  
I’d rather be surprised, not anticipate a new disaster.

I’m easily spooked and don’t want to  
have my coffee grounds read;  
I’d rather be surprised, not anticipate a new disaster—  
remember the first time I drank Turkish coffee.