Coffee House

Julie Hinkle
Coffee House

Gladys pulls at her nylons, already bunching at her ankles.
She lays her tray on an empty table and sits in the vinyl booth--
Resting a moment before the chaos begins.
Outside a single star brightens
the dusky sky as
morning nears.
She hears Clyde scraping around
in the kitchen,
Preparing for the day’s orders.
Susie hums as she fills the coffee pots
with water
and Sam pushes his broom swiftly over
the sticky tile floors.
The newspaper lands with a Whack
Against the concrete steps.
A customer, the first of the day,
picks up the paper, comes inside,
causing the little bell to tinkle softly.
He lays his coat over the back of a booth,
his hat on the table,
spreads the paper out
studies it for a moment
then looks out the window at the sunrise.
Gladys sighs,
stands
"May I take your order, Sir?"

*Julie Hinkle*