Terrorist Coffee

Michael Beahan

I sip a cup of freshly brewed Cubita
"The taste of Cuba"
Terrorist coffee
Outlawed by the embargo
I have a little stashed in my freezer in New Hampshire

I've been where this contraband grows
On a family farm outside Santa Lucia
An enclave that hides in the shadow of the Sierra Escambray mountains
El Che gathered there with his campesino comrades in 1958
Preparing to march on Santa Clara and then victorious, on to Havana

The emerald coffee bushes crouch in the shade of the guayaba tree
Fertilized by marauding bands of chickens and goats
Harvested by infidels in handmade straw hats and Chicago Bulls tee shirts
A conspiratorial lot, they also grow tobacco and sugar cane for money
Tend cows, pigs, even guinea hens
Pick mangos, bananas, guava and papaya from their orchards
Pile tomatoes, boniato, malanga, yuca and cabbages on the kitchen counter

They survey the bounty on horseback
Churn fresh earth with rusting Russian tractors
And plows pulled by oxen the size of SUVs
Slap down dominos in the hot summer sun
Drink rum from plastic cups

It's all so suspicious
Thank god for the watchful eye overhead
Streaking across the heavens, blinking