Change

By Declan Rous

I watch the man walk into the store. He walks gingerly and with a light step. He came to this gas station every day during my morning shift. He wore the same plain suit and combed his hair over in the same way. He always roamed to the coffee in the back where he would fill up a disposable cup with straight black coffee. He would always buy a package of donuts and the day’s newspaper. He would always have the same total:  $6.57. He would always pay with a ten dollar bill, and he would always tell me to keep the change.

I remember talking to him about it around the sixth day he did this.  I told him to take it. That he doesn’t have to give me almost four dollars every day. He told me that he didn’t like change. That he didn’t want to carry it around in his pocket. He told me to keep it. I didn’t put up much of a fight with him after that. I mean, I don’t mind receiving $3.43 every day. I still think it’s weird though. I usually go out and spend it each day on something new. Once I bought some cheap shades, another time I bought myself some fast food. I always try to keep it fresh and see what I can do with my tips from the day, and I always know that I’ll have at least three dollars and forty three cents.

The man walks from the coffee pot to the end of the aisle, where he picks up the same package of glazed donuts from the days prior. He continues to walk until he reaches the end of the counter and picked up today's paper. He pulls out a ten dollar bill and hands it me.

“Can I get my change in quarters if it’s no trouble?”

I am stunned and shocked. It takes me a second to respond.

“Yeah, no problem.”

The man begins to smile and to collect his thirteen quarters, three nickels and three pennies. He looks up and says his usual, have a great day. He walks out the door. I am stuck staring out the door, watching him drive away with my change ringing in his pockets.

I hate change.