

## The Goatherder's fortune

We climbed up the hill as the sun rose above the distant horizon, our master in toe, spurred us forwards onto the highland flats. When we reached it, we lazily walked about eating the grass that was growing there. It was the same as every day, but only in the warm season; then we would return to the lowlands and shelter from the cold in our clay house. It didn't keep the warmth in, so we would huddle together for one another's body heat. But right now, we are grazing, enjoying the heat of the sun on our backs.

Among the grass there was a plant with some red-brown berries on them. Tempted, I went closer, I sniffed them and then ate one. Nothing happened so I ate another one then and another one. Energy rippled across my body, and I started to run about feeling full of life. The others stared at me and soon noticed the red-brown berries and went to try them too. Soon we were all running about and jumping, energy filling us with joy. Our master stared at us not understanding what was happening. He tried to calm us down, calling out to us and trying to get to us and pat us, but there was no way of doing that, at least that was what we all thought, but eventually the effects of the berries did subside, and I dove down with the others to get more. That's when our master managed to finally reach to us without being kicked from our excessive happiness. He picked one of the berries and put it in his mouth. Nothing happened, he looked at us perplexed. After a moment, light seemed to come to his mostly lifeless eyes and he seemed revived. He stared at us and the berries in awe then grabbed a handful and ran off, telling us to go before him. We did as we were told and ran down the hill in front him.

We soon reached home, and he ran into his house. Voices could be heard within and then he came back out and ran back up the hill where we had come from. I followed him back up, the sun had not yet set so I wanted to enjoy its warmth for longer. The others did not follow. They didn't want to get caught doing something they had not been told to do. I followed him up to the building on top of the highland. He went in and I followed him. He didn't stop me. I don't think he really noticed. We went in. The men inside threw the berries into the fire, shouting at my master. A pungent smell came from them, making the men rush to the flames and pick out the berries and crushed them to get rid of the burnt bits. They put them in a cup and poured some water out and drank from it, making them all smile as each tasted the drink. My master went out smiling and I followed him back down as the sun was setting. When we reached the bottom, he went into his house, and I went into mine quietly avoiding anyone else's attention. That night we could all hear a celebration going on and we could not sleep.

Next day we went back up to the highlands. We all huddled up at the exit wanting to go back up before the cold season. He herded us up and when we reached our destination, we went to the berries, but he stopped us, and he picked them all putting them in a basket that he had brought. As the sun was going down, we descended the hill, and we were closed in our barn house. Next day we all huddled up again to go out, but this time he did not come for us. When he came out of his house he sat down and started to crush the beans beside a fire with a pot on top, with water bubbling inside. When he had crushed some of them, he threw them into the water and a pungent aroma wafted out towards us making us feel energised and we tried to break the gate that was blocking our way to go to the smell.

Day after day he made this drink. And every day we tried to escape, but one word from our master would always silence us and we just stood there longing for the berries and watched as people came by our master's house and dropped a few pieces of metal into his hand and took a cup of the liquid with the berries.

Winter came and we all huddled together for warmth. Some of the weaker ones of our number died, but most of us survived. When the warmer season came by again, we were herded to the next village over. This village was bigger and we were penned in a small enclosure. One by one we were brought out before a crowd of men that shouted to each other and then when the shouting would subside, we would be herded elsewhere. I never saw my old master again. I was bought among others and never saw my old friends again either.

## Bibliography

Lindsey Goodwin, 'Ethiopian Coffee Culture', *Ethiopia's Coffee Sayings, Coffee Origin Myth, Coffee History and More*, (updated on 17 September 2007), <<https://www.thespruceeats.com/ethiopian-coffee-culture-765829>> [27 July 2022]