

# Dinnerview: Anthony Frame

written by Danielle Susi | November 1, 2017



Anthony Frame is an exterminator from Toledo, Ohio, where he lives with his wife. He is the author of *A Generation of Insomniacs* (Main Street Rag, 2015) and of four chapbooks, including *To Gain the Day* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2015) and *Where Wind Meets Wing* (forthcoming from Sibling Rivalry Press). He is the editor/publisher of Glass Poetry Press, which publishes the Glass Chapbook Series and *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*. His poetry has appeared in *Third Coast*, *Harpur Palate*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Muzzle Magazine*, *The Adroit Journal* and *Verse Daily*, among others. He has twice been awarded Individual Excellence Grants from the Ohio Arts Council.

Here, he talks hometown restaurants, cold leftover pizza at night, and one last cookie.

## **On his all-time favorite meal:**

Oh, hell. That's a seriously tough question. One of the greatest things about living in Toledo is that we have so many restaurants – I've heard we have more restaurants per capita than any other city our size, but I think every city says that. So, I'm not sure.

There's the amazing Stromboli, club or pepperoni, from Calvin's Italian Restaurant, often prepared by my friend and fellow poet, [Michael Kocinski](#). I love the combination of the crisp outer dough and the warm, melting fillings. Or, a solid Hungarian hot dog (or ten) from Tony Packos (as seen on M\*A\*S\*H) – I mean, you really can't go wrong there. Manos Greek Restaurant makes these amazing beef tips where the beef juice melds with the beef and carrots and I can pretty much eat them all day every day.

But I guess I'm going to say my favorite all-time meal, as opposed to favorite food, would probably be the one my wife usually makes for my birthday. Bar-B-Q Ribs, with her secret Bar-B-Q mix, cheesy potatoes, corn

bread, and often some fresh green onion and sliced tomato from her garden, depending on how the crop is coming in that year. May's my busiest time of year, where I'm working twelve to fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, so we find a day, usually midway between our two birthdays, and commit to taking enough time to sit down and eat together. She prepares as I'm heading home, we eat, we sit in the yard, she talks about the work she's been doing, I talk about pretty much anything other than work (probably the press), I do the dishes, and before we get back to the bustle of our busy schedules, we get at least a few moments to shut out the world and watch the bees and hummingbirds and spiders and, on good years, the praying mantises doing their things in the garden.

### **On what the light looks like during his favorite meal of the day:**

Here's the crazy thing: I love breakfast. I mean, LOVE breakfast. I'm a sucker for eggs. Scramble them, fry them, turn them into an omelet, whatever. And hash browns – don't even get me started. And waffles and pancakes and chocolatey cereal and – agh – yeah, breakfast is alright. And I love the light for breakfast. I love the magic hours – the hours shortly after dawn and shortly before dusk when everything you photograph is just perfectly lit.

But – the thing is, I never really get to eat breakfast because of my day job. I'm usually at work by 3:30 or 4:00 am and I'm not a morning person. So I can't get up at 2:30, wake up a bit and make breakfast. I just get up, sleepdress and turn on the autopilot in my brain to get me to the office and out on the road. Sometimes, I can grab a snack or something at a gas station but, even then, my light for breakfast is the headlights of my work truck and the stars.

But I've been doing this thing lately, on one of my monthly routes, where I'm in Hudson, Michigan, and I'm treating this diner before they open. It's like 5 in the morning and there's no one there but the staff and me and I don't really have anything else to do for an hour or so. So I sit down, have a cup of (heavily sugared) coffee and the cook makes me this giant, glorious breakfast. A four-egg omelet with the hash browns and diced ham and green pepper and onions all inside the omelet. And it's quiet and they haven't turned on the news and they're busy prepping for the day so it's just me, my breakfast, and some poems, which are, in their own way, a wonderful light to read by.

### **On snacking while writing:**

I tend to chain smoke, too. And bite my finger nails. And I'll munch on whatever's around. Chips, Combos, Twizzlers, a scrap of paper I just tore up. You name it, I'll chew on it. I don't actually like it – I really like taste and when I'm writing-munching, I'm not really even aware that I'm munching so I lose the best part of the munching experience.

### **On his go-to late-night snack:**

Cold left over pizza. Every time. I'm not convinced anything is better. Add whatever else I can find while rummaging around the kitchen – maybe a brownie

or a rice crispy treat or some potato chips – maybe a few (hundred) chocolate chip cookies – who knows – but the chilled pizza’s the star of that show.

**On his food quirks:**

If I’m eating with a spoon, I blow on it to cool it off. Every time. Every bite. Soup? Blow on it. Cereal? Blow on it. Mashed potatoes? Blow on it. I didn’t even know I was doing it until one morning when my wife was looking at me and I asked her what was up. She said, “Did you just blow on your cereal?” and I said, “No, of course not,” and then proceeded to blow on my next bite. “Holy crap, I \*am\* blowing on my cereal!” And her cereal was soggy by the time she stopped laughing.

**On his final meal request:**

Hopefully, I’m at home, sitting on the couch, next to my wife, completely unaware that I’m about to give up the ghost. Maybe there’s some Tori Amos or some Dave Matthews or some Monkees or the Hamilton soundtrack on the stereo. Maybe it’s mid to late fall – the light is so glorious at that time of year – and maybe I can see the leaves outside, slowly crawling toward the ground. In this scene, there’s no body of water, but maybe in retirement (if we’re so lucky) we’ve found a nice little place along the river, maybe I can hear the humming of The Mighty Maumee. Or maybe we’ve moved up north, some little town along the banks of Lake Superior, and her waves are breaking against the beach. I don’t know.

I’ve been looking through a lot of my recent poems and there’s a strange obsession with death. I hope, by the time I go, I will have outgrown that. I hope I’ll have gotten on with the business of living. That nice, desperately quiet life that Thoreau so disparaged but which, I think, sounds awfully wonderful. “Death”, Dickinson wrote, “is a Dialogue between / the Spirit and the Dust.” So, I don’t know. I wanted it to be unrememberable. What’s the simplest, most forgettable meal you can imagine? Let it be that. Let it be a frozen lasagna fresh out of the microwave. Let it be cold pizza. But, oh, whatever it is, if the goddess is good, she’ll let me have one last cookie.