

Dinnerview: Casey Rocheteau

written by Danielle Susi | January 20, 2021



Casey Rocheteau was born on Cape Cod, and raised as a sea witch. They are a Callaloo Writers Workshop, Cave Canem, and Bread Loaf Writers' Conference fellow and a former Writer in Residence at InsideOut Literary Arts in Detroit. Their second poetry collection, *The Dozen*, was released on Sibling Rivalry Press in 2016. Winner of inaugural Write A House permanent residency in 2014, Rocheteau resides in Detroit, in a home they won with poems.

Here, they talk about making Freeze Pop sleeves biodegradable, a taco costume as drag, and a final meal that is Return of the Jedi-meets-gay beach.

On their all-time favorite meal:

All-time favorite seems impossible, but I'm going to talk about tacos and why they're the most delicious food. I first encountered tacos in my childhood. I cannot recall the date because of the boundaries of human memory. I remember learning to cook taco meat with those seasoning packets from my dad, also as a child. I was also on an *Odyssey of the Mind* team in elementary school, and in second grade, we had to do a skit about food. My mom and I made this elaborate taco costume, and by that I mean my mom definitely made it. I would say that was my first time in drag.

In truth, I hate elaborate meals because I am a restless person. I don't like being served multiple courses because the longer I spend sitting and eating the more uncomfortable I get. I spent a week in Sicily for a writing retreat, and the meals, while absolutely delicious, felt like some sort of social experiment to see how long I could sit still. Tacos have never done this to me. They are a versatile, impactful, powerful gift from Mexico.

For my 34th birthday, I wanted fish tacos and me and two of my friends went on a 5 hour quest in Southwest Detroit because there was an issue at every restaurant. The first place didn't have fish. The next place had fish, but no

tacos, and so on. It was probably very tedious to my friends, but they insisted we keep going till we found a restaurant with them, and when we did it was the most regular degular taco you could want. It was perfect.

On what the light looks like during their favorite meal of the day:

Slowly slanting in from the east and casting the kind of shadows that don't hide anything. If it's early enough, the sky will have a pinkish orange hue.

On snacking while writing:

I drink a lot of seltzer and tea throughout the day. If I snack, it's likely something boring like nuts or dried fruit.

On their go-to late-night snack:

Lately, popsicles. My favorite are a non-dairy coconut, but like let's talk about Freeze Pops, right? I feel like if they could make them with biodegradable sleeves, that's really the only thing to improve upon.

On their food quirks:

I eat the bumps off of the bottom red delicious apples first, and have since I was a kid. I refuse to eat ice cream in a cone. I hate ketchup. I put Old Bay seasoning on pretty much everything. I don't know if this is a quirk, but I eat raw oysters like some sort of feral sea witch. Also, a friend pointed out recently that it's weird that beef and broccoli is my favorite kind of pizza but least favorite kind of Chinese food. I don't have answers, just preferences.

On their final meal request:

This question feels loaded considering unless you're about to be executed, you don't really know when your last meal is coming. And if you're being executed, the circumstances aren't under your control. I'll play along, but it's under protest. Also abolish the death penalty already, sheesh.

I love a barbecue. The vibe is the end of Return of the Jedi. The setting is gay beach (aka the part of Riis Beach in front of the old asylum) circa 2013. It's a seafood feast. There's crab, there's scallops, there's still corn on the cob and yes it's a little sandy. Since we're on a beach, there can be a clambake going too. It's me and 2500 of my closest friends, and if there's drama, I don't know shit about it.