

Dinnerview: David Tomas Martinez

written by Danielle Susi | January 6, 2016



David Tomas Martinez's debut collection of poetry, *Hustle*, was released in 2014 by Sarabande Books, winning the New England Book Festival's prize in poetry, the Devil's Kitchen Reading Award, and honorable mention in the Antonio Cisneros Del Moral prize. He has published or is forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Boston Review*, *Oxford American*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and features and reviews have appeared in *Poets & Writers*, *Publishers Weekly*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, *NBC Latino*, *Buzzfeed*, and many others. He has also been a Breadloaf and CantoMundo Fellow, and is finishing his Ph.D. at the University of Houston's Creative Writing program. Martinez is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX.

Here, Martinez talks about tacos, eating by candlelight, tacos, Yerba Mate by the barrel, and oh, did we say tacos?

On his all-time favorite meal:

Tacos are my all-time favorite meal, any type of taco. If you fried up dirt with manteca I would be disgusted, but if you slapped that mess inside a tortilla, pure gold, Pony Boy. My love for all things taco doesn't have one moment, just like I can't locate in time when I first really appreciated breathing because I have always been doing it. As a child, my family had the luxury of hopping in my parents' Monte Carlo and trekking across the border into Tijuana. My father spent his summers there, at his aunt's house, so he knew the city well. Once a month we would go to Mexico, and each time our family would try a different taco stand. My father always knew where the best stands were located. They always used mesquite to cook the meat, always had spicy salsa, and it was always amazing to watch as the taqueros begin the process: slap a tortilla with a swath of guacamole, pinch meat with that tortilla, and in three distinct movements, like a drummer, spoon salsa, then garnish with onion followed by cilantro.

On his go-to late-night snack:

Two squares of fair trade dark chocolate and an organic Honey Crisp apple accompanied with an herbal tea.

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

I prefer eating by candlelight. Sharing a meal that I cooked with the person I love while candles flicker and Al Green spins on the record player is an easily repeatable ecstasy. How often can we say that, how often can we say, I can repeat this ecstasy easily, with just a bit of effort? How often do people need to escape their lives by traveling far so they can enjoy a few minutes of their day? We sit down with others to eat so that we may share a moment of pleasure with another human being. Food, in that way, is a communal extension of sex, prayer, and ceremony.

On snacking while writing:

Though I can write for long stretches, I usually don't eat while I'm writing, but I do drink tea, Yerba Mate, by the barrel, which makes for habitual rounds to the bathroom.

On his food quirks:

I drink one Kombucha a day, and if it is a rough day, it's a two-Kombucha day. I try to eat organic and natural, avoiding processed foods, for health and vanity reasons, so identifying where I don't have quirks in my eating habits is probably easier than noting my quirky eating patterns.

On his final meal request:

TACOS!!!! WITH ALL THE HOMIES!!!! IN A SPACESHIP!!!! HEADED TOWARDS THE SUN!!!!