

[Dinnerview: Diannely Antigua](#)

written by Danielle Susi | June 17, 2020



Diannely Antigua is a Dominican American poet and educator, born and raised in Massachusetts. Her debut collection *Ugly Music* (YesYes Books, 2019) was the winner of the Pamet River Prize and a 2020 Whiting Award. She received her B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts Lowell where she won the Jack Kerouac Creative Writing Scholarship and received her MFA at NYU where she was awarded a Global Research Initiative Fellowship to Florence, Italy. She is the recipient of additional fellowships from CantoMundo, Community of Writers, and the Fine Arts Work Center Summer Program. Her work has been nominated for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Her poems can be found in *Washington Square Review*, *Bennington Review*, *The Adroit Journal*, *Sixth Finch*, and elsewhere. Her heart is in Brooklyn.

Here, she talks about eating in bed, Chubby Hubby ice cream, and the near impossibilities of replicating a special meal.

On her all-time favorite meal:

My grandmother used to make mashed potatoes and boiled eggs anytime she took care of me after school. I used to hop off the bus knowing that it would be waiting for me, that Barney would be playing on the TV, and that I'd sneak extra salt from the kitchen when she wasn't looking. It has been eight years since my grandmother passed away. As simple as this meal is, it doesn't taste the same when I try to replicate it. No one makes it like her.

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

It's afternoon. The sky is still bright but with the promise of dark waiting in the distance. It's the perfect time to take a nap.

On snacking while writing:

It depends on what type of writing I'm doing. When I was in undergrad and needed fuel to write research papers, I used to munch on Cheez-Its and sip NOS energy drinks while intensely typing away at my desktop. Now, I tend to write my poetry in public spaces, usually at a café or diner. During my thesis semester in Florence, Italy, all the waiters knew I was the weird

American girl who would drink cappuccinos and eat French fries at any time of the day.

On her go-to late-night snack:

I am addicted to ice cream. Although it's not in my author bio anymore, I used to include the fun fact that my favorite flavor of Ben and Jerry's ice cream was Chubby Hubby. It has since changed (and really how is it possible to have a favorite flavor when there are so many?) and I am currently obsessed with Milk and Cookies. And much like when a mouse is given a cookie, I too need other things to go with it. After something sweet, I must have something salty. Usually any ice cream binge is followed up with some potato chips and French onion dip.

On her food quirks:

Eating in bed, is that a habit? A bad habit, perhaps. Because I have a light-colored duvet, I lay down a towel like I'm having a solo picnic, and I watch episodes of Schitt's Creek. This is about the eighth time that I've watched the TV series in its entirety. It's my go-to "eating in bed show."

On her final meal request:

My final meal request would probably be a recreation of the first dinner I had in Florence with fellow graduate students who later became dear friends. We met at a restaurant called Simbiosi, just a short stroll away from the Duomo. I ate perfectly al dente pappardelle topped with fontina cheese and shaved black truffle, and I drank several glasses of chianti. More important than the delicious food, I remember how our hope and excitement was palpable—new friends, a new city, new research discoveries, new personal discoveries. I'd like to leave this earth with that same sense of hope, that life will continue with that fervor, that somewhere beyond the grave I'll be toasting to a future.