

# Dinnerview: Isobel O'Hare

written by Danielle Susi | January 31, 2018



Isobel O'Hare is a poet and essayist who has dual Irish and American citizenship. They are the author of the chapbooks *Wild Materials* (Zoo Cake Press, 2015), *The Garden Inside Her* (Ladybox Books, 2016), and *Heartbreak Machinery* (forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press in 2018). Their book, a collection of erasures of celebrity sexual assault apologies, *all this can be yours*, is due out in February 2018 from University of Hell Press. Two of O'Hare's poems appeared in *A Shadow Map: An Anthology by Survivors of Sexual Assault* (Civil Coping Mechanisms Press, 2017) and their collaboration with the poet Sarah Lyn Rogers will be published in *They Said: A Multi-Genre Anthology of Contemporary Collaborative Writing* (forthcoming from Black Lawrence Press in 2018). You can find them at [isobelohare.com](http://isobelohare.com) and @isobelohare

Here, they sing the praises of green chile, discuss the nostalgia of snacks, and review the importance of utensil sizes.

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

Since I moved to New Mexico, few foods bring me greater joy than green chile. I first ate it at a restaurant in Taos, where it was paired with a chile relleno covered in pumpkin seeds. It was heavenly. Since then I have eaten green chile in many forms, from green chile chicken enchiladas to green chile cheeseburgers to green chile bread. I didn't realize how much of it I consume until my mother visited me recently and, after several days of introducing her to various restaurants around town, she exclaimed, "No more green chile! Please!" It is very easy for me to overdo it. But it really is the most wonderful food on earth, and I plan to make a green chile mac and cheese soon.

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

My favorite meal of the day is breakfast, which usually consists of some type of egg dish and a damn fine cup of coffee. Here in Taos, especially at this wintry time of year, the morning light is misty in this sort of ethereal, magical way. Living at such a high altitude can make you feel like you're drifting through clouds, especially when you first wake up.

**On snacking while writing:**

I am a big fan of stovetop popcorn. I make it with coconut oil and then season it with salt and pepper and a lot of butter. I dump it into a gigantic bowl and snack on it until it's gone. I picked up this habit from my father, who used to bring me a bowl of plain, unsalted, unbuttered popcorn while I sat at my desk doing homework. I can't believe I ever ate popcorn without anything on it and actually enjoyed it, but thankfully now I get to make my own damn buttery snacks.

**On their go-to late-night snack:**

At the end of the day I always want something sweet. I like to have a cup of black tea with milk and a few cookies. This is also a nostalgic thing for me, as I used to live in Ireland and the very first thing I consumed upon landing in Dublin was a cup of black tea with milk and some HobNobs. To this day, every single time I drink black tea it transports me back to that moment. It feels like home and calms me before sleep.

**On their food quirks:**

I can only eat certain foods with utensils of a certain size. For example, big spoons are for cereals and soups while small spoons are for yogurt and ice cream. My brain glitches if a spoon of the desired size is not available. DOES NOT COMPUTE; CANNOT CONSUME THE FOODS.

**On their final meal request:**

Some kind of green chile! And I'm eating it here in New Mexico with all of the friends I made when I first came here through the Helene Wurtlizer Foundation. We all came to Taos for an arts residency (some of us are writers, some painters, some musicians) and we bonded through our first exposure to green chile followed by the shared trauma of being here together when Trump was elected. So if I could choose my ideal meal situation, it would be all of us sitting in the common area once more, feasting on green chiles in an effort to heal from the demonic possession we are all experiencing. I mean, if anything is gentle enough to soothe the body yet strong enough to expel some demons, green chile has got to be it.