

# Dinnerview: Kathleen Rooney

written by Danielle Susi | September 9, 2015



Kathleen Rooney is a founding editor of Rose Metal Press and a founding member of Poems While You Wait. A recipient of a Ruth Lilly Fellowship from *Poetry* magazine, she is the author of six books of poetry and nonfiction, and her debut novel, *O, Democracy!* was published in 2014. Her essays and criticism have appeared in *Allure*, *The Believer*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and elsewhere.

Here, Rooney talks about “spritzing,” free refills, and butterscotch good enough to drink.

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

Last summer, I got to visit Venice for the first time, and to learn about the custom of the Aperol Spritz. It’s sort of like Happy Hour, but better. You find a bar or café late in the afternoon and sit down outside under an umbrella, hopefully by a canal, and you order an Aperol Spritz, which is beautiful and orange and delicious, and then you drink it accompanied by little snacks—maybe even just a basket of greasy potato chips, or some olives—and you watch all the other people who are also spritzing, and you watch the other people walking or boating by. It’s like a show.

## **On her favorite meal of the day:**

I eat the same breakfast every day with few exceptions: oatmeal (with bananas, flax seed, and molasses) made by my spouse, Martin Seay, who possesses impeccable oatmeal skills, and who also eats this same breakfast just about daily. I’m an early riser, so when I’m having this breakfast, the whole day has yet to happen and everything is pure potential energy. When I’m eating my oatmeal, it’s easy to think: “Today could be the day.” The day for what? I don’t know. That’s the beauty of the breakfast feeling.

## **On being vegetarian:**

I’ve been a vegetarian for twenty years, ever since my sophomore year English teacher Irv Lester (rest his soul) opened my eyes to the fact that not eating meat (which made me feel guilty—the poor animals! The earth!— and which I never liked anyway) ever again was a viable option.

## **On snacking while writing:**

I can’t prove it, but I have this hunch that chewing on something crunchy makes you smarter—like the motion of the jaws stimulates the brain. I don’t care if it’s true, because it feels like it is, so I like to snack on crispy things (apples, almonds, peanut-butter-filled pretzels, etc.) when I’m writing, especially if it happens to be tricky. Snacks help me power through to this greater intelligence that is reachable only by snacking.

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

The ideal midnight snack is another Martin Seay specialty, easily makeable in the microwave, perfect for when you've just come home from a bar or a reading or a reading at a bar: A pepper-jack cheese quesadilla on an El Milagro white corn tortilla with a little bit of sea salt, two jalapeno slices, and Rick Bayless' Guajillo salsa.

**On guilty pleasure butterscotch:**

One of the most pleasurable foods on this planet is this "Ridiculously Easy Butterscotch Sauce" from [Smitten Kitchen](#). I can't make it too often because it's too tempting to pretty much just drink it.

**On her final meal request:**

Something with infinite free refills so I'd never be done and they could never kill me. As for setting, a city, I guess, because cities are the greatest.