

Dinnerview: Richie Hofmann

written by Danielle Susi | June 22, 2016



Richie Hofmann is the author of a collection of poems, *Second Empire* (Alice James Books, 2015), winner of the 2014 Beatrice Hawley Award. He is the recipient of a 2012 Ruth Lilly Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, and his poems appear in the *New Yorker*, *Kenyon Review*, the *New Republic*, *Ploughshares*, *New England Review*, the *New Criterion*, *Yale Review*, and *Poetry*. He is currently a doctoral student at Emory University.

Here, he fantasizes about opening an artisanal ice cream shop, divulges the need for cheese, and outlines the tasting menu that would reflect his life.

On his all-time favorite meal:

This is difficult, because I'm obsessed with food. My friends know I really enjoy passionately describing what I eat or want to eat. I like dining out a lot. I like cooking dinner and preparing salads at home. One of my hobbies is making ice cream, and I fantasize about starting an artisanal ice cream shop in an alternate life. So many wonderful meals with so many wonderful people. My partner Ryan and I love learning about other cultures through food and travel.

One favorite meal: In Vietnam last year, we went to a small restaurant run by the fabulous Ms. Vy, an incredible chef and entrepreneur in Hoi An. There we ate a large squid stuffed with pork meat, possibly the most amazing thing I've ever eaten. My tongue loved the salty seasoning and the varied textures of the meats while my mind loved how the dish undermined the impossibility of those animals ever meeting.

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

The sun is just coming up, so the light is finding itself, finding its shape and weight and texture on everything outside the window while I stir the coffee grounds in my French press. Making coffee is all about timing, so the

light is different at these various intervals of pouring and stirring and waiting. The light is incipient, and these rituals mean so much to me.

On snacking while writing:

Does coffee count? I'm overstimulated at all times, but especially while writing. In between stanzas, I can suck down an iced latte in under forty-five seconds.

On his go-to late-night snack:

I go to bed at 9:30 pm and my partner discourages snacking.

On his food quirks:

I have been known to unscrew the lid off of a Parmesan shaker at a pizzeria, because honestly it just takes too long to accumulate the amount of Parmesan cheese I require. In college, my best friend Danielle and I would pay extra at Pizzeria Regina in Boston for a plate of grated Pecorino Romano.

On his final meal request:

I want my last meal to be a tasting menu that tells the story of my life. Food from all of the cities where I've lived, from all of the restaurants I dined at with the people I loved, from all the events and milestones—and each course I'd share with those people from that moment: friends and lovers come and gone; my family, of course; the mentors who taught me everything; my students who taught me everything; my partner, my children (when they exist); and the food will unlock all of our memories and allow us to experience them again—all of those feelings and pleasures; and then Stephen Sondheim will ring a little bell, and the perpetual dessert will begin.