

Dinnerview: Toby Altman

written by Danielle Susi | March 15, 2017



Toby Altman is the author of *Arcadia, Indiana* (Plays Inverse, 2017) and five chapbooks, including recently, *Security Theater* (Present Tense Pamphlets, 2016). His poems can or will be found in *Crazyhorse*, *Jubilat*, *Lana Turner*, and other journals and anthologies.

Here, things...get a little out of control.

On his all-time favorite meal:

For a long time, I lived in a COLONIZED! valley, a rural retreat, such crisp desert, sweet dessert, where all the water wore the flag of LA and travelled in closed aqueducts, the color of blue flannel. There I engaged in the sweetest pastoral pursuits: i.e. I bottle-fed a mottled calf named Hephaestus in the pre-dawn gun-metal dark while shooting stars burst over-head; or I drove a silver suburban through the sun-burned hills to buy cartons of cigarettes at the gas station on the reservation outside of town. 0 there were other gas stations, blue and red. 0 there was a town (this is true) called "Big Pine" legendary for its lonely, monstrous pine, phallic surge from the floor of the desert. There I stopped my suburban and silenced its carbon cough to eat enchiladas from a counter in the back of a Sunoco station – and how they must have dipped their beans in reservoirs of shale gas so pungent and savory were they! Alone at the pick-nick tables, I gorged myself in a landscape drained of its sustenance, a landscape that suckles raw lengths of trash.

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

I munch and mangle, chew and choke, in a greenhouse, under sheets of light magnified and repeated by twists of green carbon. I feast on a grow-lamp, even now I sink my teeth into filthy biscotti in a tube of flying aluminum, which spews drought from all its lamps.

On snacking while writing:

MY WRITING SNACKS ON ME!

On his go-to late-night snack:

When the hunger of the END OF DAYS hits me I peel a strip of necrotic flesh from the walls of my pink cavern I beat a pink drum I fry a fish filet on the flank of an oil drum I spill sheets of oily laundry into the gulf and lick its syrup up YUMMMMMMM

On his food quirks:

OK HONESTLY I DRINK A FUCK TON OF MINT TEA THE ONLY PROPHYLACTIC AGAINST THE WORLD OTHERWISE HOW NAUSEOUS IS ITS SPINNING HOW FRAGRANT ARE ITS CORPSES TOUGH SPEARS OF MINT PUSHING THROUGH THEIR CRANIA AND PLUCKED BY A BLUNT SICKLE THEY TRAVEL TO ME IN TIGHT GREEN BOXES PACKED BY ANONYMOUS HANDS

On his final meal request:

SWADDLE ME IN TWINKIES AND DROP ME IN A VAT OF ANTIBIOTICS BABY! STRAP SKIRT STEAKS TO MY BREAST LIKE A VELLUM SUICIDE VEST AND SEND ME TO THE MARKET! STRIP ME TO THE MUSCLE AND NERVE AND FRY ME IN CANOLA OIL OR CRISCO THEN THROW ME TO THE BIRDS! I ALSO LIKE BURRITOS!