

Corporate Lunch Poems

I wrote the following poems between 2011 – 2014 while working at a corporate “desk job” for the behemoth insurance company, Liberty Mutual. There were probably a few hundred poems written during this short timeframe, but most have been lost (along with a good chunk of my sanity) and scattered to the winds of time. What’s transcribed below are just the short poems I was able to find and salvage from recovered email records.

I distinctly remember my days at that insurance company as being long, grueling, and immensely boring. My only temporal enjoyment (frankly the only thing that seemed to get me through the day) was eating lunch with my small group of friends (I sometimes referred to us as “The Lunch Bunch,” but this label was never accepted by anyone else, nor did anyone even acknowledge the moniker). In those days of yesteryear, we would often stretch the lunch “hour” to multiple hours to help lessen the pain of corporate drudgery.

An hour or two before heading down to the in-office *Liberty Cafe*, I would email my colleagues a short poem. I would daily create an official Microsoft Office work invite and send it to each of my friends to ensure they had properly blocked out the requisite hour on their calendars. In that meeting invite was embedded my poem of the day.

Being a mercurial person, some of my poems were flighty and whimsical (having to do with just the nature of eating lunch itself); however, if I was having a particularly boring or frustrating day, the language would become darker – even morbid or depressing at times. For working eight hours a day at an insurance company is inherently morbid and depressing.

Without further ado, and in no particular order, here are those poems...

Is It Meat?

I dost think for lunch today I'll eat

Anything that they prescribe as meat

Though it's known the cut is poor...

(And for years we've tried to ignore)

Sadly, 'tis lack of options we're to bear

And grumble 'til we all despair

The choices forced on us today

Are just what they are... be what may

At our dearest Liberty Cafe

No Liberty at Liberty

Subtitle: *No Escape: A Despondent Poem*

Subtitle 2: *Damn the gods!*

There is no hope; we can't escape
Each day we're resigned more to our fate
Each grueling day looms before the next
There is no worst, there is no best!
It's all the same: one undying line:
Unbroken wear of the daily grind.
Damn the ceaselessness of this place!
The tired looks on each broken face
Damn the lighting, damn the drone;
Damn the meetings, damn the moans.
Damn the gods! Where'art they be...
Damn them all for abandoning me!
Are they in heaven or we in hell?
Damned if any of us can even tell.
The lunch hour is our one respite
And even that gleam is not so bright
But we'll carry on in our living curse
Until we're canned or death takes us first.

No Escape

We sleep, we work, we dine, we play

We seem to wilt more each day

We play, we work, we sleep, we dine

Throughout endless, ceaseless time

We play, we sleep, we dine, we work

Without respite, without perks

We groan, we kneel, we sit, we cry

We work all life and then we die

Fin

October Skies

Just one more dollar and another day
With October skies now cold and gray...
We barely live, and we mostly die.
Each single day we wonder why:

Why our cup's filled with monotony?
We — who were once so alive and free!
The gods have cursed our mortal lives
And leave us love- and sleep-deprived.

Zounds! We sit in little cubes of lies
Whilst the succubus dost misguide.
She says she's good and stands up tall;
She holds a torch and stands for all...

But she's a whore! Damn her to hell;
She's a villain sheathed in copper shell.
Oh, you vile mistress, sweet "Liberty":
You hath lied to us, you lied to me!

Man 'twas not meant to live in a box,
Yet here we are, and with pleated socks.
With a phone, a desk, a chair, a pen...
And some youth to concede again.

Sweet "Liberty," you stand so high.
You once spoke of life, but it was lies...
Our life is sucked betwixt your walls
We once could walk, but now we crawl.

The 'freedom' you feign to ascribe
Is hardly that for those who sit inside
Your walls at 150 Liberty Way
For us it's just another dollar and another day

...Before we die

Respite!

When in the ceaseless day we're filled with fear,
We can all rejoice once lunch comes near.
And after calls have died with the last laugh
We have mediocre food and unfriendly staff...

The emails fade away for a short respite
While we're allowed our chairs to quit;
Lonely cubes of sorrow put aside a while
To entreat to moldy salads and feigned smiles.

So hark! our fated hell-toll's not yet rung;
The song of withered cherubs may soon be sung!
The harbinger of death kept soon at bay...
While we all retire to the Liberty Café.

Lunch Is Near!

1/8/2014

Friends:

Lunch is come, yes – lunch is near;

It's upon us now: it's truly here!

Give up your cares and quit your chair

Forget your doubts; have no fear—

It waits downstairs for us to eat;

To enjoy, we must now move our feet.

Let us not delay lest miss the fillet

I'll head there now, and we'll soon greet!

Inclement Weather

1/14/2014

The day is wet
And the sky unsunny
Yet we're inside
And yearn for yummy
Delicious meats
For us to eat
And oodles of noodles
In our tummies

The day is long
And the work is tough
But noontime comes
Filled with edible stuff:

There are cute fruits
From Ian's store
And the pallid salads
Won't be ignored

The day is harsh
But the stomach knows
When feeding comes
Out goes all woes...

The day is sad
But so are we
To sit here pining
Quite listlessly...

But lunch is nigh!
It nears by an' by
Let's enjoy some breeze,
Then requite misery.

The Lunch Bunch

1/15/2014

The Lunch Bunch unites again to feed
It is a time of warmth and mirth
Their work put down and their souls are freed
It is a time of great rebirth.

The Lunch Bunch is raucous crew
And have monstrous appetites
With bodies sound and hearts beating true
They strive to turn all wrongs right

The Lunch Bunch is a kindly gang
They do live and they abide
(Alas, about them no song is sang)
But recognition's not for what they strive.

The Lunch Bunch lives to simply serve
They serve all those whom they care
They help so many without one word
Expected in return to share

But ... on their lunch break the soldiers five,
Those brave and youthful saints--
When at lunch they pause to revive
And all good-doing laid restraint

For when at lunch the brave Lunch Bunch
Is just like ... you and I!
They simply sit at a table and eat their lunch
And while eating they look like normal guys.

A New Casey!

1/20/2014

Some say it's no longer time to laugh and play

For our sweet Casey has gone away:

To a land of dread and endless shame,

But we shall carry on lunch in his name.

And behold: we have a new Brian to replace

The old one, red of hair and pale of face.

A better Brian! All know it true,

So let's not lament, or be so blue...

Let's celebrate rebirth of a better day!

A better Casey, and a better way

To eat our lunch, with replaced friends;

It's the beginning, friends; it's not the end!

End of an Era

01/23/2014

The lunchtime feast can't start too soon—
However, we will attempt to wait til' noon.
We'll try to curb voracious appetites
Before subpar edibles we'll masticate.

And the time will soon upon us be:
From our desks and work we'll be set free.
At least a time—to sit, talk, and chat
Before returning to all get fat

At our desks, like poor lumps on rocks
(Lumps who at least wear Armani socks).
But from one till five without exercise
We don't wonder why co-workers reach their size.

And it's hard not to ponder at least a bit—
When we look around at all the folks unfit—
If we don't participate in some sick, epic game:
Are we being softened for EATING and certain pain?

And with that thought my mind's unsettled,
As I recall child's tales of Hansel and Gretel.
For perhaps the devil dealt with David Long
And, in return, payment for all his wrongs...

He promised to make his people fat and lazy,
And feed them well and drive them crazy
With endless work and immobile cubes
And turn us all into defenseless boobs!

It is a sad possibility we must consider—
(And I don't present it now to make us bitter),
But I mention this not so simple hunch:
For this might be a job for the fearless Lunch Bunch!

To seek out the man behind the curtain
To find the truth and make sure it's certain.
Are we being fed and primed as cattle?
And, if so, I say Long's cage we must rattle!

The Lunch Bunch must reveal the heinous plot,
And we must stay tight if we're to have a shot.
We'll meet today to devise our plan;
We'll meet at lunch: I hear they're serving ham.