

# AN ELEGY TO A HAMBURGER STEAK WRITTEN IN A FOOD FACTORY

The curfew warns the future little slaye,  
The husbandman cranks up the family clock,  
The roundhouseman beats his way along the pave  
And leaves the world for me, to stand and mock.

Now shines the phoney landscape to the eyes,  
And all the air is filled with joyous sport  
Have where the dehorn in his stupor lies,  
And frowny flappers plead before the court,

Save that from yonder rosehued brussel'd stairs,  
The painted jacobelle bewails her fate  
To such as, pawing o'er her bonded wares,  
Refuse to ante up the promised rate,

Beneath those rugged bricks, the city's pave,  
Where heaves the dirt in many a shouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell, (a warrior brave),  
The crude forefathers of Hamburger sleep,

The rumbling call of street cars overhead,  
The tootings of salvation's cornet band,  
The whispered libels better left unsaid,  
No more can rouse them from their bed of sand,

For them no more the speeding waiters wheel,  
Or busy porters mop between their legs;  
No children rush to spoil grandaddy's meal,  
Or spill their soup upon his ham and eggs.

Oft did the buffalo to their arrows yield,  
Their clothes before some stubborn grizzly wore;  
How jocund did they drive their squaws afield!  
How rung the woods when they began to snore!

(Let no "Ambition" mock these state-ly "Tuts,"  
Their homely jags, and destiny obscure;  
Nor "grandeur" wear, with half-ambitious guts,  
The short and simple flannels of the poor.)

The toast of swieback, potatoes sour,  
And all that gravy, all that natives curse  
Await alike the inevitable hour:  
Hamburger—ah me, it couldn't be worse!

Nor you, T-bone, commute to these the blame  
If chicory on their beaks no pimples raise,  
Where in the one armed dump (it is a shame)  
The creamed fruit salad drives us all to craze.

Can sweet beef steak or animated jaw  
Back to its bellows call the vagrant breath?  
His Honor, can he provoke the dormant law,  
Injunction it to function still in Death?

Perhaps in this selected grub is laid  
Some mind once pregnant with genteel satire;  
Hands that the Reds of empires might have awayed  
Or waked to ecstasy the fastest liar,

But Knowledge to their eyes her lovely form,  
Rich with the scents of time, did ne'er disclose;  
Chill Penury repressed their passion warm,  
And froze their genial current of their nose,

Full many a sham of poorest grade serene  
The pale unfathomed Hamburg may reVEAL;

Full many a flower is cut to deck the scene  
But adds its fuel to ruin a ruined meal,

Some village cut-up, that with neat dispatch  
The little tyrant on his head he stood;

Some mute, inglorious Milton here may hatch,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of All-Ireland's good,

The respect of evil senates to evade,  
The threats of wealth and power to despise,  
To gather poverty of every shade,  
And read their answer in the nation's pics.

Their lot forbade: Nor sterilized alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes corralled;

Forbade to wade through labor to a throne,  
And shut the gates of reason to the shelled.

The twinkling ray of Truth to ridicule,  
To hide the blushes of ill-covered shame,  
Or—to inoculate some uncut scowling jewel—  
With ethics of their fast gyrating game.

"The howling mob may bow to empty Glow,  
Exalt the Knave and canonize the Press;  
But more to militants their safety owe  
Than Corporations care to e'en confess.

"Hark, how the tumbling storm that whistles by  
Bids every sleeping, dying, snow-flake rise;  
How nature's forces whispering shrill on high  
Proclaims the Right of All—to Organize!"

Far from the madhouse of incessant war,  
These restless martyrs never cared to stray;  
Upon that cool sequestered other shore  
They hold their set, uncompromising away.

In some fond ear a murmuring soul replies,  
To some dull brain a token it may give;  
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries:  
That in our grub their sacred ashes live.

Perhaps in this poor steak of odds and ends,  
Incapable of proof that it is dead,  
Some Thomas Gray may live to make amends,  
For words that he, nor I, nor we have said.

Perhaps some grazing cow no facts ignored,  
Condemned no thought, with pride-ful scathing breath;  
But gathered up each blade of knowledge stored,  
And passed them on to victory in Death.

## EPITAPH

Here rests "Old Brindle" on a polished plate,  
A waif quite unacquainted with despair—  
A brilliant thought finds here a sigh-ing mate  
Where everything is old—and nothing rare.

Its humble parts in harmony re-hooked,  
The odds and ends of surging thought to dole;  
As many times re-used as it is cooked,  
To recompense the native in his soul.

No further seek its merits to implore,  
Or drag the ghastly linens out to wash—  
There they, with dishrags, gainfully explore  
The bosom of Hamburger—Oh my Gosh—

Mayhap some Rose of Roseland, Illinois,  
Wilt deign to not retard our Silent Wish,  
Nor dessicate the substance of our joy—  
Nor jar the soulful contract of our Dish.

T-Bone Slim.



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