

Hunger

Fiction

I've been pooping three times a day.

Ever since I was excommunicated from the church, I've felt constipated. Then I started following blogs and Tumblrs that said I should become closer to nature. That's just the trend this week. Crystals. Seeds. Energy.

The rest of society is steering toward atheism and away from God, so why shouldn't I? Seeing girls in bikinis, eating Yoplait gives me solace. So, I started eating more yogurt. Drinking tea. I fashion myself a sort of alchemist, like those dark elves in that World of Warcraft game my husband and I enjoy so thoroughly.

I've been putting on the pounds, but my husband says it's more cushion for the pushin' and, these days, he's the only god I see around. He supports me and my quest for balance. But I can't stop eating.

I'm always hungry. The girls in the forums say I'm trying to fill a void. Are there problems at home? Am I being fulfilled? Did someone recently pass away, and is this new obsession with food a way of grieving? I can't tell them I'm a god-fearing Christian and that I miss my spiritual white knight, or I'd get kicked out of there too...

Food fills me up. It makes me feel whole. When I'm eating, all thoughts leave my mind and all that's left are textures, smells, combinations of tastes and compounds. Different parts of the food I once ingested without blinking an eye, I now dissect with my tongue. Roll around bits of fruit in my mouth, find the nuts, cleave the flesh from the skin with my teeth. And meat I find disgusting now. No one eats meat on Tumblr. They're all stick thin. They own their prowess. They have the power to become one with the great deity. The goddess.

I don't buy all that mumbo jumbo, but I follow their dietary rules. So, it's just yogurt for me. Nuts. Leaves. Nature's gifts. Don't eat anything that once had thoughts of its own, they say. And still, I can't look like them.

I just keep getting heavier and heavier. My foot falls rock the creaking halls of our apartment, miniature shockwaves follow the earthquake each step imparts upon the old wooden floor. Even when I'm taking a piss at 3 a.m. Even when I'm tip-toeing, trying not to wake him up. Even when I think I'm being my quietest.

My doctor says to slow down on the intake, so I start eating. Very. Slowly. Now, per his vague prescription, I can't seem to get anything done at work. I'm always snacking. Savoring each salt crystal on the ridge of a chip until the saliva dribbles down my chin.

My cube mates snicker. We have those new low-walled cubes, where everyone can see what everyone's doing. And they all know I'm not working. Just eating. With eyes closed. I've never felt so alive. Taking in what I've been given. Savoring each moment. Each fig of parsley. Every fennel seed. And all the while, all I can think about is the next big meal.

I got fired from my job for taking long lunches, but food always goes weird the minute you put it in the fridge. Even if you leave the avocado seed in its abominable bed of guacamole, it's never the same the next day, despite what those Pinteresters say.

So, I must take my time and eat. One day, probably as a gag, a few of my old coworkers invited me out to lunch. I live near the office building, so I said, “Sure, what the heck?”. I’m just sitting at home, sending in job apps, and eating myself to death... or am I veering towards something more akin to enlightenment? Who knows? They’ll never understand.

Still, I take them up on their offer. It feels like it’s been an eternity since I’ve seen anyone else but my husband and the glare of the Flash-built numbers flying through a bloody battlesphere on the screen.

They wanted to go to Burger King, so I looked up the menu online. OK. I can have a side salad. It has tomatoes on it. I can get my juicy, crunchy, sweet fix that way. It’ll take me an eternity to eat it anyway, since I started eating with my fingers. To get me that much closer to my ancestors: The kneelers, the benders-over, the ones built strong through evolution to wield wide baskets of barley on their backs.

We had a nice chat. What are you up to? Any luck finding a new gig? That sort of thing. Then they all decided to get some iced coffee in place of dessert. The curly-haired one said it would be like our modern version of living in the Dark Ages, as she called it, back when people would drink a cup of coffee after every meal, because they would stuff themselves silly to the point where they needed a little jolt of caffeine to get them back up and at ‘em, again.

Yeah, I can dig that. I’m all about convening with my ancestral kindred, I say. To this, they tittered, but then we did it and I got hooked. Another trend to latch on to. Oh, yes.

After that, I started skipping lunch and I’d just run on over to the BK Lounge for one of their iced mocha coffees. Keeps me speedy. I sent in so many resumes, eventually my old company stumbled upon mine on Career Builder and they decided it would way be easier to just rehire me and try to somehow manipulate me into curbing my bad habits than it would be to train an entirely empty person.

I’m way more productive at work now, and my coworkers ask what my secret is. They say I’m chipper. And, Am I getting a little thinner? No, probably not, I say. They want to know what diet I’m on.

My husband says there’s nothing but sugar in those coffees, no actual caffeine. It’s a placebo, he says. I don’t care. I buy three coffees a day and just suck suck suck on ‘em and I can keep working. I’m still pooping a lot, but maybe that’s a way for my body to tell me I need to expel old habits.

Like God.