



menu



menu

In Other Words Festival 2013

As part of Liverpool City Council's *In Other Words* festival to celebrate the re-opening of Liverpool Central Library, Dave Ward, Grace Stead and Tom Vipond acted as 'poetry waiters' in Café 81 Renshaw Street, the Bluecoat Upstairs and Café Tabac, as well as on World Book Night at St. Georges Hall.

Customers were offered specially devised poetry menus, including word games, poetry puzzles, the chance to write their own poems and the opportunity to have a poem read to them at their table.

'**menu**' is a discreet event, originally created for independent cafes in the 1980s with funding from the Walker Art Gallery, Festival of Comedy and Merseyside Arts. The original and some subsequent events are documented at <http://www.windowproject.net>.

The waiters interact with customers as and when invited. St. Georges Hall was very busy with requested readings. At Café 81 participants played word games and composed poems. In Bluecoat Upstairs a lot of customers earnestly scribbled while requesting selected poems; and at Café Tabac a rich mixture of football supporters in town for Liverpool's last home game and wedding revelers still out from the night before engaged in serious conversations around poetry and film as well as indulging in word play and writing their own poems!

At all the venues the waiters emphasized that the activities were to celebrate the reopening of Central Library. In some instances people were unaware that this was happening, or had only vaguely heard about it but '**menu**' also sparked off reminiscences about when and why people used to visit the library.

Approximately 400 customers were actively involved in '**menu**' - either solving poetry puzzles, composing poems or listening to the poems performed. The poems on following pages were among those left by patrons.

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CAFÉ TABAC

Quick Snack

You will not go now, stay always for a day.

I hear the water

running low down on the hat stand,

onto the road and its pavements.

Keep it in, nice and deep.

Salad

My gentle hand was wild, the danger busily naked.

Remember change, tame sometime.

Flee foot, seek range.

Bread needs continual love.

Toasted Sandwich

They told me you had been to her –

The madness of my soul.

She wears a coat made of pure fur,

Her choice of animal is a mole.

Moles don't have a lot of fur,

They didn't do anything to hurt her

But she skinned twenty-five

While they were still alive.

(Between yourself and me) –

It was plain murder!

Café Poem

Black pudding is rather nice

When served with beetroot and rice.

I've never eaten it more than twice

Because of its extortionate price.

Black pudding is rather odd.

No-one knows what it's made of –

At least I'm sure it's not cod

But it looks suspiciously like the innards of a frog!

Ruth & Laura

Quick Snack

We will go now as always on Sundays

to hear the river's water lapping; creeping low and riding high.

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CAFÉ TABAC

Café Poem

The present has no duration
The future has no relevance
Let's all get together with tigers...

Café Poem

Whilst on holiday in Liverpool city
Café Tabac appeared very pretty.
We came inside for a drink and a bite –
And we've been back for the last three nights!
The food is good, the café is trendy –
Not badly priced and the staff are friendly!

Café Poem

Grantchester by Rupert Brooke
written in Café Des Westernes, Berlin 1912
(My Excerpt)

Here I am
Sweating, sick and hot.
'*Temerperamentvoll*' German Jews
Drink beer around.

I will pack my bags.
Get myself a train
And get me back to
Seacombe once again.

Lunchtime Limerick

My friend likes to order a half
But thought that the bar maid would laugh.
He went for some wine,
But did not feel fine.
The café was hot, as were the staff.

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CAFÉ 81

Renshaw Street

Café Poem

It's time.

Time to titillate the tonsils,

Tingle the tongue

And tease my tantalized taste buds

With the tastes of ecstasy.

Time to make a friend

with the stranger sitting next to me

on a cold, dreary day.

This place is the antiseptic to the sore.

Get yourself down to 81 Renshaw.

Lou Reed Foster

Quick Snack

I will just go now as I always get attacked a day before Christmas.

I hear the underwater monsters low growl on the wind.

I could stand on the road or the pavements and fight it

And put it in a deep dark hole.

Toasted Sandwich

They told me you had been to her

And spoke about the sea.

She had a look

That was mistook,

Now he's had to flee.

The king is not a man

For second chances

On lending out pity.

But let's keep what happened to Len.

Between yourself and me.

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BLUECOAT UPSTAIRS

Café Poem

Bring me my knife and fork
I have no time to yap and talk.
Forgo this pretence at idle chatter,
I'd rather indulge in fish in batter.
Time is short and I must start
On Bluecoat's famous Bakewell tart.
Conference is all well and good,
For me I would rather food.

Toasted Sandwich

They told me you had been to her house
And that she fed you a bowl of Scouse.
I think she had stolen the recipe,
But that's between yourself and me.

Lunchtime Limerick

I only sat down for a relaxing break
But now my brain is beginning to ache.
A limerick does take time;
Most lines refuse to rhyme.
Instead of a poem I'd rather eat cake.

Quick Snack

Will it go now or always a day.
Hear a waterfall low
Flowing on the standing road off pavements.
Fit in! (Jump deep).

Quick Snack

I will not go now, never, always, every day.
Hear the water trickle low,
high on the band stand.
The road, path, pavements
drink it in, warm, deep and flowing.

Quick Snack

Will I go now, and always each day
hear the water, oh, it's so low slung
on the Standish road of pavements.
Put it in the basket deep.

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BLUECOAT UPSTAIRS

Café Poem

I came here just to eat some food.
You asked for a poem, to say no would be rude.
So here we go, I'll do my best,
Although it's proving quite a test.
No, it's no good, I just can't do it.
I've tried my best, I think I blew it.

Starters

I work and I play each and every day
That keeps my brain tick tick ticking away
When the music plays I like to dance
A sound that leaves me in a trance
Beside the speaker I hear the beat
Fluttering and twirling and moving my feet

Quick Snack

Will you go now and always come back on Monday?
Hear the water from the shower, low temperature on the dial.
As I stand I hear cars on the road
and people on the pavements, life in motion
as it is in the world of deep and meaningful thought.

Salad

I seek danger but remember,
sometimes I like to be gentle.
With continued change in my life it can be wild.
I busily flee from place to place,
bread in my pocket and water in hand.
Foot follows foot on the naked grass land.
It's tame but the range is always the same.

Dundee Cake

A poet's critical trope
is to cast nets as lace.
In verses strives by dint.

Starters

I stood in the rain that Sunday,
that got my feet wet when I sang.
When I danced the crowd they applauded.
A dog came along who started to bark
beside the red cap on the ground,
fluttering his brown trail to the sound.