

Colloquy

Liam Foster

A translucent silhouette: that echoed luminosity, or, that outline of absent refulgence—a shadow. It spilled off the bench, upon which two men—or women, if you'd like, not that they have to be either—sat, splashing onto the concrete below. There was an amorphous-shaped river and a blue sky, coloured deep cerulean. It was a Wednesday: these days came often, even weekly. If I might only just blazon the serendipity of the moment, the likes of which can hardly be blazoned, that very moment... serendipity!—Oh!—I apologize. Resting on that bench of exquisite oak, or perhaps a faux veneer, the great debate continued...

“A hotdog is not a sandwich,” said the first.

“It is, man!” replied the other, “what else would you call it?”

“A hotdog.”

“But: neither is it hot, nor is it of dog.”

“Unfair. And a sandwich has no sand. But a hotdog is this: a piece of cylindrical encased meat, held horizontally in long sliced bun.” His (or her) mouth watered. He (or she) looked around to appeal to an unseen audience. He (— ok, I give up. Use your imagination if it bothers you) looked back.

“Needless adjectives, I would think,” said the other man

“Necessary. So unbelievably necessary.”

“Necessary only for the hotdog itself. Here's what I'm saying: a hotdog is a kind of sandwich, like a P B & J is a kind of sandwich. Not all sandwiches are P B & Js, but all P B & Js are sandwiches. Sandwich is like one of those umbrella terms. A hotdog is a sandwich”

“No.”

“Yes!”

The man turned away in anguish. “Look. Ugh. Listen. You, saying that a hotdog is ‘only a sandwich.’ That, like, diminishes the majesty of what a hotdog is. Let it breathe for itself: the uniqueness of the hotdog. Have some respect for the dog, man. C’mon.”

“Not how I see it—”

“You don’t even know what hotdogs or sandwiches are, man. You have celiac disease.”

“I don’t need gluten to know a sandwich!”

“You’re getting far too emotionally invested.”

“I’m indifferent.”

“I’m more indifferent!!!”

...The birds sang indistinct songs and the amorphous river ran.

“Let’s start again, shall we?” he said, “lay out your argument.”

“Alright...a hotdog is not a sandwich, because of the seamed nature of the bun and the tubular nature of the protein— the frankfurter. The very structural integrity is, like, completely different. No sandwiches have such a nature. They gotta be categorized differently as all foodstuffs involving bread products gotta be. Would you define, say, a meat in between croissant slices, as a sandwich—yes?—you freak. Never mind: a separate point to disagree on, after lunch. But, my friend, I’ll say

it again: no other sandwich has such a nature; these things must be individually defined,” he concluded.

“Wait—”

“What?”

“—Forget the bun and the seam: what would you call bread holding an Italian sausage?”

“A sausage sandwich”

“Ah! And what about this: tender, marinated roast beef, held in bread?”

“Beef sandwich?”

“What about if, instead of tender, marinated roast beef— a frankfurter?”

“A hotdog.”

“Ah ha! So, essentially, if we switch out the frankfurter for any other meat, it becomes a sandwich.”

“I did not say that.”

“You didn’t not say it.”

“I disagree,” said a bird, conclusively.

The two men laughed and left for lunch, and all the along the breeze, the birds sang their song. Birds sing songs just like writers write (except the birds don’t sing about singing, I imagine). Then it began to rain. The sidewalk became a dark grey mirror. The two men sat silently inside a dry café and ate their cylindrical, tubular sandwiches.