

Chris Powici

Let Them Eat Oatcake!

a future food fantasia

Let them eat the world
beneath their feet
pignut and parsnip, carrot and neep

Let them snuffle for truffles in Forfar
and dig chanterelles in Stranraer
and bow to the blewitt, morel and chicken of the woods

And let them raise their heads
to the miracle of vertical lettuce
in a circular economy
shining from their high, wet rows
above the recycled basketball court floor
in a converted plastics factory
just outside Cumbernauld

Let them wake herbs from their hugelkultur beds
and rouse the sleeping radish, the lazy kale

Let them swallow a spitting sunday roast
from the virtual-fence-app-controlled
oxen and boar, stag and ram
who roam the shimmering Greta Thunberg oakwoods
north-east of Falkirk (formerly known as INEOS Grangemouth)
and on high days and holidays let them gobble

a quarter-pound grasshopper and mealworm burger
dripping with Hebrides hydroponic tomato ketchup
or chickpea-brine mayonnaise. Or both.

And let them smell the sweet smell of seaweed and ozone
as they munch a fillet of one of the millions
of lice-free wild salmon teeming at the mouths
of the Forth and Tay, Dee and Spey
and who give themselves, happily, to the waiting
re-usable hemp-woven nets
before being deep-fried in oatmeal stout and cricket flour batter

But *make* them eat their greens – spinach and cabbage
(or Swiss Chard if they live in Bearsden or Morningside) –
as well as their blaeberry blues and cloudberry yellows
and the deeply passionate reds of Strathmiglo strawberries
raised in rain-glistened polytunnels
wrought from melted-down lateral flow tests

And give them this day their daily
wheat and rye grain Zentrofan milled-bread
smeared with runny Shetland honey
now that bees are abundant again

And let them give thanks to the bee
the beautiful, generous, necessary bee

Let them chew ceps
bite bramble
pluck plums
crunch crab

And for old time's sake let them eat oatcakes
so they may taste the past
crumble sweetly on the tongue
as they down a dram of 300 year old Isla malt
or pea-flavoured climate positive gin
and when their day is done
let them walk hand-in-hand
down vennel and loaning, brae and glen
and drink their fill of starlight over the Clyde
and moonlight over the Minch
every last drop
forever and ever.
Amen.