

God Wants a Sandwich

by Michael Seidel

Over lunchtime, Lloyd heard God's voice. It said, "Buy me a sandwich."

Had it been out loud or in just in his head, Lloyd wondered? So he asked, "God?" First timidly as a thought, then with his voice between cupped hands.

No response.

Lloyd considered what to do. He could consult a priest, but then, what do priests know about sandwiches?

"I'm waiting," Lloyd finally heard.

"Did you hear that?" he asked a young girl who was standing on one foot, eating a popcorn ball.

"I'm not supposed to talk to strangers," the girl answered.

"Normally, I don't either, but what if the stranger is God?" Lloyd asked.

The girl shrugged and fell over, choked on a kernel and was rushed off.

Downtown was filled with places to get a sandwich. But all the good places were busy, and Lloyd had to be back to work.

If he returned late, could he tell his boss, "I'm sorry, but God needed something from me?"

Can God write excuse letters, like a doctor, Lloyd wondered?

He went to the cart in the park that serves hot dogs made from things like chickadee and stingray. It was never that busy. He bought one of each, thirty-six in all, quite a variety, and he held up the bags they were in.

God made Lloyd keep his arms extended awhile, explaining, "Son, I created all things; the heavens and the stars, the coconut crab, and the English language and all words in it, like gut and rot and sandwich. Son..."

Lloyd interrupted, saying, "Please stop calling me son. It's makes me think of my own dad, which makes me feel terrible."

Next there was a sound like the air being let out of a tractor tire at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Two cars smashed together, the sky started to look like a foot infected with gout, a thunderstorm began, people threw rocks through shop windows, a woman shrilled as she tripped over a Standard Poodle who'd gotten loose, there was a calamity that tore the street apart into faults that made it look like zebra's back, the lake swelled up and its water filled downtown like an aquarium, at which time school children began belaying down from their classrooms with jump-ropes and were swept away.

Lloyd went back to his office and turned on his computer. With his chin in his palm, his head felt heavy. First he thought maybe his thoughts were made of granite, then he lapsed into a nap in front of his spreadsheet.

He woke up later. Who knows how much later. Through his office window, the sky was bright, like the glow that comes off anyone when they bite into a delicious, well-made sandwich.

