

* **Writing in Restaurants (Gustatory Sonatinas)**

1. A man walks into a restaurant and is seated at the last empty table. He begins his dinner and then puts it aside, half eaten, and starts writing in a notebook. Another man comes into the restaurant, but there are still no tables. The two men's eyes meet. A moment passes, and the second man leaves the restaurant. The first man continues writing, weaving the other man into his spaghetti.



2. Two women are drinking coffee in a café. One of them spills her coffee and seriously scalds herself. The other bursts into tears.



3. A woman and a small child sit down for lunch. The woman orders a chicken salad sandwich and the child orders a hamburger with fries and a soda. When the food arrives, the child doesn't like the hamburger because the bun has sesame seeds on it. The fries taste funny because of the off-brand ketchup, and the soda is Pepsi instead of Coke. The woman listens to the child's complaints for ten minutes and then whacks it on the side of the head, knocking it to the floor. The child stops complaining and eats all its food. The woman glares at the other patrons.



4. A man is eating a ham sandwich at a lunch counter. The waitress asks him if he would like another cup of coffee. He tells her the coffee is undrinkable and shouldn't be served to alley cats. She asks him why anyone would serve coffee, even bad coffee, to animals. He glares at her

and stuffs the rest of his sandwich into his mouth. She waits for him to reply, but he begins to choke on the food, and jumps up from his stool and staggers around, clutching at his throat. His face turns white and his eyes roll back. Another patron in a booth rushes over and grabs the man around the waist and heaves violently, pressing his fist into the man's diaphragm. A great glob of half-chewed sandwich flies out of the man's mouth and splatters across the lap of another patron, an elderly woman in a knit dress. She screams and leaps out of her chair, half falling, but a nearby patron catches her and guides her to the end of the counter, where she begins dabbing at the mess on her dress. The choking man spits out the rest of his sandwich, slaps some dollar bills on the counter, and rushes from the diner. The waitress clears away his dishes and pours another patron some coffee.



5. Three teenagers are sitting in a booth with their schoolbooks. They talk loudly and coarsely, using all the dirty words they know of, as often as possible. The other patrons glance at them disapprovingly. The waitress takes their order, along with a dozen rude remarks, and returns to the kitchen. A man in a neighboring booth gives them dirty looks again and again. A woman with a small child hurries out of the restaurant. A man and a woman walk in, notice the loud teens, turn around, and leave. Three of the people dining at the counter grow annoyed and depart without dessert. The waitress brings their burgers and fries and soft drinks. They make fun of her uniform. She blushes and hurries back behind the counter. A man comes into the diner with a large black bag slung over his shoulder. He sits at the counter and orders apple pie. While waiting, he notices the students and looks at them with disgust. They see his reaction and call out various childish insults peppered with the same old dirty words. The man gets up, opens his bag, and quickly stuffs all three teenagers into the bag and cinches it up. The bag bumps and jiggles violently for a minute or two, and then it stops moving. He shoves it under his stool and eats his apple pie.



6. Two small children walk into a corner restaurant. One of them stands on tip-toe at the counter and asks for two grilled cheese sandwiches. The counter man tells them to get lost. They explain that they are already lost, but the counter man gives them the bum's rush out onto the sidewalk. They

run away. The counter man turns, but the restaurant isn't where he left it and he doesn't know where it is.



7. A limousine pulls up and an elegant couple enters the most expensive restaurant in town. The maître-d' seats them and the head-waiter brings their favorite drinks. Three more waiters hover discreetly in the shadows a few feet from the table. While serving the third course, a waiter trips, dumping a large dish of hot soup into the lady's lap. She jumps up and screams rhythmically while the other four waiters run around the table screaming in unison with her. The maître-d' hurries over and begins beating time on the serving tray with a ladle. The waiter who spilled the soup climbs onto the table and kneels among the salad plates, moaning and beating his chest. The gentleman rises and pulls out a .38 caliber snub-nose revolver and shoots the kneeling waiter in the head. He falls over onto the place settings and the other waiters freeze. The gentleman and the lady sit back down while the room erupts in applause. The elegant couple and the waiters rise and bow to the other patrons, and then return to their meal while the dead waiter is removed on a serving cart.



8. A tractor-trailer rig pulls into an all-night truck stop. The driver is huge and shabby. He sits at the counter and asks for three orders of hash browns. When he is finished, he orders three cheeseburgers with chili sauce. After the cheeseburgers, he devours three orders of apple pie à la mode, and then downs three chocolate milk shakes. The waitress brings a large mug of coffee and he drinks it all at once without cream or sugar. He lights a cigarette and the skinny man on the next stool leans over and points to the No Smoking sign. The truck driver immediately puts out the cigarette, pays his bill, and leaves.



9. Four little girls are sitting around a doll table set for tea. The first little girl puts her Barbie on a toy chair and pretends to feed it tea from a tiny cup. The second little girl has a larger doll in a fancy lace dress and she holds it over the table with a toy teapot, pretending to pour tea into the other tiny cups. The third little girl takes a lady Smurf doll and waves it up and

down as if the doll table were a trampoline; she bounces it all around the table, knocking the table settings into disarray. The fourth little girl writes furiously in a tiny notebook.



10. A teenager and his girl friend get out of their car at a drive-in movie and walk up to the snack bar. The man behind the counter is very tall and has a hawk nose and pimples. He wears an orange bow tie and a dirty white apron. A big window behind the counter shows the movie playing outside. The teens order a large soda with two straws and a bag of popcorn. They take their food to a small wire-leg table and watch the movie through the big window. As they sip soda through crossed straws, the planet Tirandia explodes in a shower of rocks and flame.



11. A middle-aged man walks up to a family restaurant on the edge of town. It is late at night and the restaurant is closed. The man takes a cardboard six-pack out of his rucksack and sets it on the ground. Each section of the six-pack contains a can of spray paint. For the next three hours the man paints an elaborate calligraphic mural on the restaurant wall.

