

## On Buttermints

It's not just buttermints. It's circus peanuts and conversation hearts and Nutella and mayonnaise on french fries. It's playing tennis on a ninety-nine point nine degree day, loving a day of waist-high snow, and living in an central-air-free-house. It's a put-on-your-shade-it's-so-bright Hawaiian shirt with not one but two obnoxious hues of orange and 80s music so cheesy it didn't even bother to join the new retro come-back trend. It's all of the things I love with a slightly obsessive passion which make others gag, whine, and sweat.

Who in their right mind could possibly not find the smooth, creamy feeling of a hailstone-esque mass of sugar, cream of tartar, and artificial color yellow 5 dissolving slowly in their mouth and creating saccharin-filled cavity havens completely scrumptious?? Most people with normal sensory apparati would answer with an emphatic, "Everyone!" I, however, am a creature of radical tastes. Call me the "extreme queen" if you will but I find a fat, soggy, sitting-in-a-vat-of-grease-for-close-to-an-hour french fry smothered to the midpoint in mayo (possibly the world's heart-attack-inducingest condiment) more appealing than those fresh, crisp, golden kind they place so carefully in the fry sleeves for all the ads dipped in Heinz any day.

Wading to class through winter's little frozen gifts - I love it. Sweating profusely - I love it even more.

So, there it is. It's now been officially established: My sensory pleasure meters function on a completely different scale from ninety-nine point nine percent of the population. There's always an exception to the rule - the occasional sucker for candy hearts at Valentine's Day or the infamous mayo/ketchup combo lover. However, so few possess and infatuation so strong as to provoke a late-night Meijer run in mid-March to catch the post-holiday sales or a hearty appetite for double-digit fat and cholesterol contents that I truly believe I'm in a league all my own.

With this establishment established, there now exists the question of just why I harbor such an insane taste for the untasty...or perhaps desire for the undesirable is a more appropriately collective phrase. Is it an indication of inherent desire to be different? An unconscious effort for creativity? An abnormal method of demonstrating a need for constant attention even if through disgusted gasps and direct disagreement and therefore a sure sign of emotional neglect as a pre-teen? An adaptation to the harshly varying Indiana weather patterns? Perhaps a psychological metaphor for a largely undesirable career path, such as that of the funeral home director, which I'm destined to follow? Evidence of a heightened sense of kindness toward those judged harshly? Merely an unhealthy tendency of favoring extreme circumstances and environments? Or simply a signification of some sort of fetish for grossing people out?

Speaking in less philosophical and intellectually lofty words though, I think it suffices to say that I like strange things because mediocrity annoys me.

All hyper-analytical proposals aside though, I just really like buttermints.

-Amy Vaerewyck