

I've Been Dreaming About Eating Salmon

- Natalie Damjanovich-Napoleon

I've been dreaming about eating salmon, Tasmanian salmon, the fatty bled-of-red flesh salmon, feeding something inside me that's not being nourished outside the dream world.

I've forgotten all the lyrics to my songs.

I want to rewrite all the lyrics to my songs.

I want to black-out, white-out, erase the naive guileless girl who knew nothing about love and plants and fish and the world.

I open a packet of hot smoked Tasmanian salmon to eat with crackers, cream cheese and capers for lunch.

Inexplicably, my social media feed fills with ads for salmon.

Have they tapped into my eyes?

Richard Flanagan tells us after they began salmon farming near Bruny Island *water started dying, the fish started vanishing, slime and algae started appearing.*

They tell us not to believe our own eyes.

They tap into our Google search, our cameras, our emails to sell us *Best Aquaculture Practices*, RSPCA approved, eco-friendly, ocean-pen-raised, I-Can't-Believe-It's-Not-Science-based plump pink salmon.

I take a photo of the ocean everyday and post it to my Instagram feed.

My daily meditation.

What's the price of sad lyrics and a beautiful voice?

\$2 per head on a ticket.

I changed my name back— they keep forgetting I'm a wog, dago, ding, spick, ski, dingbat.

I want them to choke on my name, mispronounce it, call me 'Dam-jan-O-bitch', 'Dam-sand-wich' —

Damn! yarn-O-vich! How hard is it to tell a yarn, to say a name?

Oily salmon slides down my throat.

Is that *guts* or *feathers* or *macerated beaks* I can taste?

Is that another bi-lingual, double-barreled, foreign name I can't spell?

You don't belong here —

penned up in mandala-like nets in the Tasman Sea.

My daily meditation.

If you don't crisp up the skin when you cook it you can choke on it,

choke on it,

choke on it,

choke on it.

Italicised words are referenced from the following newspaper article:

Langenberg, Adam. "Author Richard Flanagan unleashes tirade against salmon farming industry". *ABC News*, April 21 2021,
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-22/richard-flanagan-allegations-salmon-farm-expansion/100085142>. Accessed 28 July 2021.