

**THE GREAT TABLECLOTH**  
By Pablo Neruda \*

big? A big tablecloth would be for many people? → all people?  
people of upper class?

When they were called to the table, the tyrants came rushing with their temporary ladies, <sup>not real relationships - prostitutes</sup>  
tyrants called to table arm candy wealthy  
it was fine to watch the women pass like wasps with big bosoms followed by those pale and unfortunate public tigers. <sup>do not worry about food; think & watch women fancy / extravagant</sup> what are public "tigers"?

The peasant in the field ate his poor quota of bread, he was alone, it was late, <sup>only lets him eat a certain amount</sup>  
he was surrounded by wheat, ate bread <sup>public officials</sup>  
but he had no more bread; no more bread <sup>dark out?</sup>  
ate "it" - wheat? seems gross? no flavor?

he ate it with grim teeth, looking at it with hard eyes. <sup>malnourished? desperate</sup>  
forbidding/uninviting/stern/cruel/severe <sup>poet - reasonable class (not lower class/peasant)</sup>  
In the blue hour of eating, the infinite hour of the roast, the poet abandons his lyre, <sup>string instrument like a harp</sup>

takes up his knife and fork, puts his glass on the table, and the fishermen attend <sup>variety of good food: roast, soup, potatoes, lamb, onion</sup>  
the little sea of the soup bowl. <sup>utensils available & glass & table</sup> more than peasant had <sup>not peasant / higher class</sup>  
Burning potatoes protest among the tongues of oil. <sup>cooking potatoes / frying potatoes?</sup>  
The lamb is gold on its coals and the onion undresses. <sup>fancy food</sup> More foods

It is sad to eat in dinner clothes, like eating in a coffin, but eating in convents is like eating underground. <sup>peeling onion</sup>  
sometimes ways of eating can be uncomfortable, not as good <sup>community of people devoted to religious life</sup>  
Eating alone is a disappointment, <sup>secretive/private</sup>  
but not eating matters more, <sup>lonely - no friends</sup> worse to not eat at all

is hollow and green, has thorns <sup>referring to hunger</sup> hunger is worse  
like a child of fish-hooks? <sup>sharp, prickly, painful</sup> pokey plant

trailing from the heart,  
clawing at your insides. <sup>something sharp & hook-like scratching insides</sup>  
hunger? really bad for health, torturous, agonizing  
hurts emotionally?

- \* Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)
- was a communist + was a politician
  - exiled to Europe from Chile
  - Nobel Prize for Literature 1971
  - poems written in Spanish
  - most poems about food / love (w/ political connection)
  - Two Residences: The Yellow Heart...
  - was exiled because "The Great Tablecloth"
  - was wealthy - was about social class separation