

Thompson's Lunch Room -- Grand Central Station

Study in Whites

Wax-white --

Floor, ceiling, walls.

Ivory shadows

Over the pavement

Polished to cream surfaces

By constant sweeping.

The big room is coloured like the petals

Of a great magnolia,

And has a patina

Of flower bloom

Which makes it shine dimly

Under the electric lamps.

Chairs are ranged in rows

Like sepia seeds

Waiting fulfilment.

The chalk-white spot of a cook's cap

Moves un glossily against the vaguely bright wall --

Dull chalk-white striking the retina like a blow

Through the wavering uncertainty of steam.

Vitreous-white of glasses with green reflections,

Ice-green carboys, shifting -- greener, bluer -- with the jar of
moving water.

Jagged green-white bowls of pressed glass

Rearing snow-peaks of chipped sugar

Above the lighthouse-shaped castors

Of grey pepper and grey-white salt.

Grey-white placards: "Oyster Stew, Cornbeef Hash, Frankfurters":

Marble slabs veined with words in meandering lines.

Dropping on the white counter like horn notes

Through a web of violins,

The flat yellow lights of oranges,

The cube-red splashes of apples,

In high plated `epergnes`.

The electric clock jerks every half-minute:

"Coming! -- Past!"

"Three beef-steaks and a chicken-pie,"

Bawled through a slide while the clock jerks heavily.

A man carries a china mug of coffee to a distant chair.

Two rice puddings and a salmon salad

Are pushed over the counter;

The unfulfilled chairs open to receive them.

A spoon falls upon the floor with the impact of metal striking stone,

And the sound throws across the room

Sharp, invisible zigzags

Of silver.

About the Author

Amy Lowell (February 9, 1874—May 12, 1925) was an American poet of the imagist school from Brookline, Massachusetts who posthumously won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1926. She was born into Brookline's prominent...

