



Oh, sure, everyone just loves condiments. But no one ever thinks about the man behind the condiments, do they? The guy who unclogs stubborn mustard valves or tops off the ketchup to keep it from wheezing across the front of your t-shirt. And in this case, by your t-shirt, I mean my t-shirt, because if memory serves, wasn't it just last weekend when you'd begged that Bad Brains limited edition off my back after the Skinny Puppy concert? True, I had on three other band T-shirts—my trademark style—and with everyone from the show staring you down and staring me down—(aww, lookit the punkrock waiter boy!)—what could I do? Even though they don't look like romantics—with pins through their nose and holding together their jeans and leather coats and orange hair dye and fake spiderweb tattoos and clown inspired lipstick—they really are, because the whole crowd melted when I whipped off that shirt for you, and you slipped it on over your halter, careful to not let your spikes or your nose ring or dog collar catch.

"I'll take good care of it," you said. Then you went back to your veggie burger and your punk rock friends, talking shop about seven-inch vinyl and your latest zine and what have you. Whatever. Late night keeps waiters busy anyhow, whether it's truckers or asshole poseur punks who can't give you the time of day or even smile in your direction after you take from him the most special of special t-shirts. And here you are again—another late night Saturday, same damn crowd, and you're wearing my Bad Brains shirt as though it had been part of your wardrobe all along, as though you yourself had gone to the underbelly of a thrift shop and extracted it from a dusky rack of ancient, color-coded golf tournament and Coca-Cola t-shirts. Did you earn that t-shirt? No, you did not. And did you and your horde so much as acknowledge me tonight, except for when I took your rather complicated and over-specialized order for onion rings and strawberry soda and hot dogs with extra catsup? Me with my GWAR T-shirt? No, you did not.

Which is why I'm all in your condiment tray tonight. And by me, I mean Me. My spit in your catsup. My giz in your mayo. Mixed in, extra creamy. Watch out, bitchez. I've been waiting all week to serve you.

Erica lives and teaches in Exeter, New Hampshire, USA. Her flash fiction collection, *Heard Around Town*, won the 2014 Arcadia Fiction Chapbook Prize and will be published in July 2015. Another chapbook, *Dry Dock*, by Red Bird Press, is forthcoming in winter 2015. Find her online at ericaplouffelazure.com

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