



SIEBENQUELL

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**John Shea:**

# Grace before Meals

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SOURCE: JAY WENNINGTON @ UNSPLASH.COM

No formal dress will be required  
but you must come  
like a child to an ice-cream truck.

Glass-spilling gestures  
are preferred  
to submissive hands in the lap.

Belching is a compliment to the chef  
and pushing peas  
on the fork with your thumb  
is blessed by God.  
But you may not pass the potatoes  
unless you come with it;

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and if you insist on twisting  
a sulking spoon in your soup,  
you will be asked for your thoughts  
without the pay of a penny.

Now before conversation  
there must be silence  
or else  
why do batons pause  
before symphonies begin.

For our subterranean prayers,  
the wordless impulses we ride  
but cannot speak.

For all who held us once  
and now hold us no longer  
but who return with upraised glasses  
when we hold each other.

For the Lord of the Supper  
who eats and drinks with all  
and makes marriage wine  
so the dance does not die.

Now  
by the favor of the festive God,  
there is no world but this table,  
no time but the moments between us.

John Shea, »the GOD who fell from HEAVEN« 1992