

SPAM, that mysterious food product, has spawned a post-modern, cross-cultural literary form: the SPAM haiku, or SPAM-ku. (Technically, most of the work contained in this archive is SPAM zappai, or SPAM-pai, although the definition of haiku has been broadened by the Matsuyama Declaration. Besides, "ku" means "verse" in Japanese, so SPAM-ku is not at all a misnomer.) Even if you are not inspired to compose such a tribute, you can marvel at the works of genius that SPAM has motivated in others.

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SPAM glistens pinkly;
Cat taps it with wary paw
To see if it's dead.
--Anonymous

The blue can is square
Why not a circular can?
Too much like dog food
--Anonymous

Critics will scoff: "These
aren't real haiku." We'll retort,
"So? SPAM ain't real meat."
--Chris Fishel, [email removed]

Formless spawn of pork,
Leers with gelatinous gaze,
Taunting my lean soul.
--William Bradford, [email removed]
Pepto-Bismol / SPAM
One yin to the other's yang
Pink pursuing pink
--Bill Turner, [email removed]

Roseate pork slab
How you quiver on my spork!
Radiant light, gelled.
--L. Sheahen, [email removed]

Fuchsia and chartreuse
The breakfast of champions
SPAM and Mountain Dew
--Bill Turner, [email removed]

AMSPay aikuhay
Ogicallay Anguagelay:
Igpay Atinlay.
--Artinmay Oodabay, [email removed]
Taco Bell comes out
with new SPAM chimichangas.
Run from the border!
--Bob Roberds, [email removed]

In Shakespeare's SPAMlet:
Shouts at Ophelia, "Get thee
to a cannery."
--Chris Fishel, [email removed]

Queasy, greasy SPAM
Slithers without propulsion
Across a white plate.
[email removed]

Patio slime trails
Are not from snails but anxious
SPAMs seeking escape.
--Mike O'Connor, [email removed]
Like a new piglet
Slick with slime, SPAM emerges
Making sucking sounds.
--John Mitchell

SPAM: the perfect food
For people who study Zen--
Meat, and yet not meat.
--Francis Heaney, [email removed]

SPAM, too, needs a wife.
What consort for my Pork Prince?
Ah! The Velveeta!
--John Mitchell

You leave the table
So offended by my meal.
Come back, little fly!
--John Mitchell
Murder mystery
solved: Colonel Mustard in the
ballroom with the SPAM.
--Chris Fishel, [email removed]

Spock scans the pink meat.
"It's life, Jim," he tells Kirk, "but...
not as we know it."
--John M. Debevec, [email removed]

Somewhere a black hole
Consumes everything in sight;
A blue can sails by.
--John Mitchell, [email removed]

Split the SPAM atom
Enormous pink mushroom cloud
World covered in pork
--Tom Elliott, [email removed]
Hormel developed America's first canned ham ('Hormel Flavor-Sealed Ham') in 1926, and eleven years later developed the first canned meat product that did not require refrigeration. It was a 'distinctive chopped pork shoulder and ham mixture' developed by Jay C. Hormel, son of Hormel founder George A. Hormel, and marketed as 'Hormel Spiced Ham' - not a terribly inspiring name for an innovative product fated to save lives, win wars, and balance diets of people world wide.

Hormel Spiced Ham got off to a slightly rocky start. Other meatpackers began to introduce their own canned luncheon meats, and Hormel lost its controlling share of the market. Soon, however, they came up with a cunning plan to rectify this situation - they would give Hormel's luncheon meat a truly catchy name. Toward this end, they offered \$100 for a suitable appellation. The winning name was, of course, 'SPAM', and a legend was born.

SPAM was launched with much high-profile advertising in mid-1937. It was called 'the Miracle Meat', and promoted as an anytime meat. In 1940, SPAM was the subject of quite possibly the first singing commercial. The jingle was to the tune of the chorus of 'My Bonny Lies Over The Ocean', and the lyrics were

'SPAM SPAM SPAM SPAM/ Hormel's new miracle meat in a can/ Tastes fine, saves time./ If you want something grand,/ Ask for SPAM!'. Hormel also sponsored George Burns' and Gracie Allen's network radio show, which included 'Spammy the Pig'. During World War II, sales boomed. Not only was SPAM great for the military, as it required no refrigeration, it wasn't rationed as beef was, so it became a prime staple in American meals. SPAM supported the war effort more directly, too. Nikita Krushchev credits SPAM with the survival of the Russian Army during WWII. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Hormel Girls performing troupe advertised SPAM as they performed throughout the country, distributed SPAM door-to-door, and even had a national weekly radio show. Ads proclaimed, 'Cold or hot, SPAM hits the spot!'

In 1960, SPAM began to be sold in 7 oz cans alongside the original 12 oz ones. SPAM began to spawn variations in 1971, when smoke-flavored SPAM was introduced. Next came less salt/sodium SPAM, in 1986, and with it the honor of being considered 'state of the art in its industry' by the Minnesota Association of Commerce and Industry." In the early 1990s, SPAM Breakfast Strips were introduced, as was SPAM lite.

What now awaits us on the SPAM front? Only time (and possibly Hormel) will tell.

Last updated February 11th, 1996, by Polly Esther Fabrique ([email removed]).
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