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WHEN?

Fri. Nov 28 While Stock Lasts

Slamming Ukrainian diner

Dear Sir,

With your review of the Pyrogy House (*Eating Out*, in the September 30 issue of *The Gateway*) you laudably sought to serve the interests of this community by telling us what we all want to know: where to get a good meal. Your reviewer wrote very favourable about this "Ukrainian" restaurant, and he or she is entitled to his or her opinion. But for the rest of us, I fancy that our interests and our stomachs will be better served by a less favourable review.

The menu at the Pyrogy

House is tiny; it runs to about a dozen dishes, but this figure is achieved by the old trick of offering all conceivable combinations and permutations of a basic three or four items. Moreover, these few items are merely junk food invested with some spurious foreign mystique. A typical combination platter consists of soggy little bags of dough filled with elastic potato, and cylinders of rice wrapped in a cabbage leaf. I have nothing against vegetarian food, and I will forego my meat

health-food freaks; however cranky in their excesses, these people do at least have a lively conception of what makes up a healthy and balanced diet. But the absence of meat is ill redeemed by a plateful of steaming starch topped with sour cream and chemical "bacon bits". And incidentally the wine and beer prices are as high as they are anywhere, despite your reviewer's airy talk of "moderate prices." Furthermore the glass that came with my immoderately-priced beer was dishwasher-warm. A small but annoying point.

I hesitate to call the place a fraud, because presumably the Pyrogy House has some satisfied customers. But your readers ought to know exactly what they would be making the long trip for: dull, stodgy, ill-balanced and tasteless food, which - given those attributes - is overpriced.

I don't know where your reviewer normally eats, but I suspect that a hamburger and french fries from Friday's must be outside his or her culinary ken, since it is certainly more tasty, and very likely more nutritional (even) than this "Ukrainian" fare. Starch is starch, and I fail to see why

Ukrainian starch should be preferable to the Canadian variety. I know it is considered fashionably liberal and cosmopolitan to be cynical about one's native cuisine and piously reverential about that of other countries; but the fashionability of the habit does not make it any less stupid.

If I call your review mealy-mouthed, it is not only because I wish to disagree with your reviewer's bland approval, but also because that metaphor is singularly and unfortunately apt to describe the physical plight of any unfortunate who dines at the Pyrogy House.

Yours faithfully

Allan Blunden

Dept of Germanic Languages

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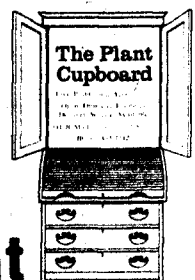
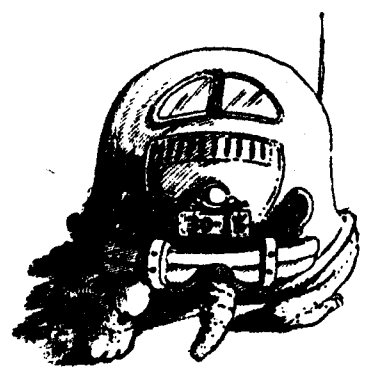
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