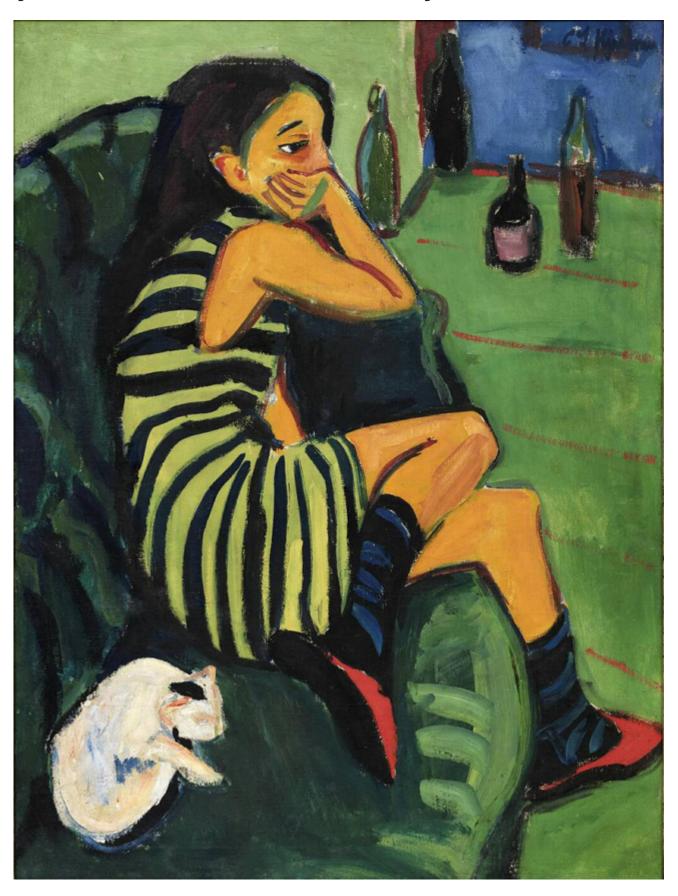
## The Number 165: Emily Hyatt

by <a href="Paul Martin Freeman">Paul Martin Freeman</a> (February 2023)



Now this is a story that all those should heed Who think the sole gustatory pitfall is greed. For read now what happened to Emily Hyatt Whose pleasure in life was by contrast to diet.

Miss Em of South Hornchurch was not overweight Nor even disliked what she found on her plate, But since she was tiny and having to scavenge Had come to see shortage of food as a challenge.

To live on as little as ever she might
Was what kept Miss Em up excited at night.
And even to dine on what none could she thought
Perversely the purpose in life that she sought.

She'd tried all those diets that you see on the telly, Recoiling from nothing revolting or smelly. Yet none could her thirst for a challenge appease: Not camel's head, eyeballs, nor maggot-filled cheese.

And so she gave all human victuals a pass And started exclusively feeding on grass. Yet soon even herbage Miss Em found a bore And quickly thereafter showed methane the door.

The next of the foodstuffs that Emily tried Was cardboard compostables, roasted and fried. Recycled materials were just to her taste, Their fibres though left her a mountain of waste.

To leather now therefore Miss Em turned her mind Until she'd devoured every shoe she could find. And thus did she go through the things on her list While always nutrition her slender frame missed.

And so it continued with Em growing thinner

As ever such items she'd choose for her dinner. She wasted and wasted away, Her thirst for a challenge no fare could allay.

But one day she noticed a change taking place When into the mirror she looked for her face. It seemed to be lower than where she expected: A difference in height had indeed she detected.

She peered at the new-looking person before her: Without any doubt she was half a foot shorter. How odd, thought Miss Em, though not really concerned For yet to continue her exploits she burned.

And so it went on and she carried on shrinking Because of her habits of eating and drinking. Whenever herself in the mirror she checked A lessening in stature she'd ever detect.

Then one afternoon when she went to the mirror, Excited to see how she'd grown even thinner, She found that she couldn't look in it at all As where she staring was only the wall.

The mirror was now somewhere over her head, So little on nutritive food had she fed. Yet still she continued her rigorous diet As we do our tale of Miss Emily Hyatt.

In fact, there is really not much more to tell As nor of Miss Em was there either as well. She soon disappeared altogether from view, Head down in a meal of linoleum stew.

And so we conclude with a nourishing moral: A point with which nobody ever should quarrel. While dieting's rewards are undoubtedly big, Remember please sometimes to eat like a pig!

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Paul Freeman is an art dealer in London. The poem is from *The Bus Poems: A Tale of the Devil*, currently in preparation. His book, *A Chocolate Box Menagerie*, is published by New English Review Press and is available here

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