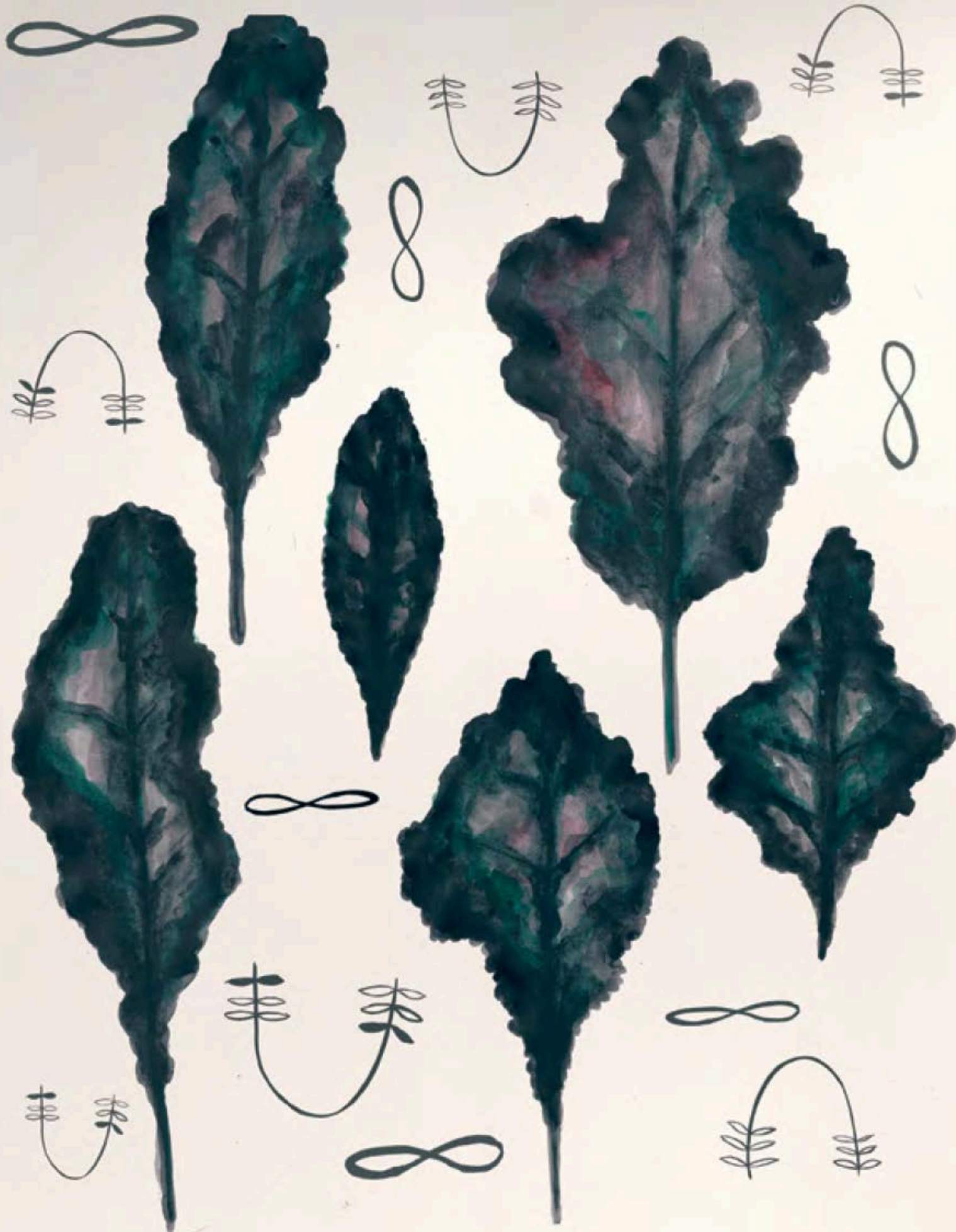


DINER JOURNAL



No Ads
\$15



.... it is Spring, so don't despair. The trees were weeping sap today, naturally from holes made by who knows what. Birches and a variety of maples and beech. I approached a maple and (and this is why I know it's Spring) golden ants were harvesting the sap! They were teeming, abdomens swollen from having gorged on the first food of the season. I couldn't resist. I ate two. They were not citrusy, they were sweet. You would have done it, too. And the tight fists of new hardy greens in the fields beside the river are readying themselves to open. So that's the news; your dutiful forager reporting from central Pennsylvania. Spring has - mercifully - arrived.

-Evan Strusinski

Issue Nº 24



PAINTING BY June Glasson

6 intro | AD

8 pig island | Chris Fischer

12 dinner with friends | Sean Rembold, Chris Fischer, etc.

24 recipes from a moose hunter | BKJ

32 aeries | Maya Lawson

34 for passion, for brittany | Sanaë Lemoine

38 nonni | James John O'Boyle

41 ikaros | Millicent Souris

51 bea & the paella | AT

52 my meshuge mishpokhe | Megan Auster-Rosen

66 my aunt pat's goose jerky | Pat Griffin

58 duck. duck. goosemeatball! | SL, KW, NP, LD

62 goose recipes | SL

64 stuffed wolf or permanent midnight* | LC

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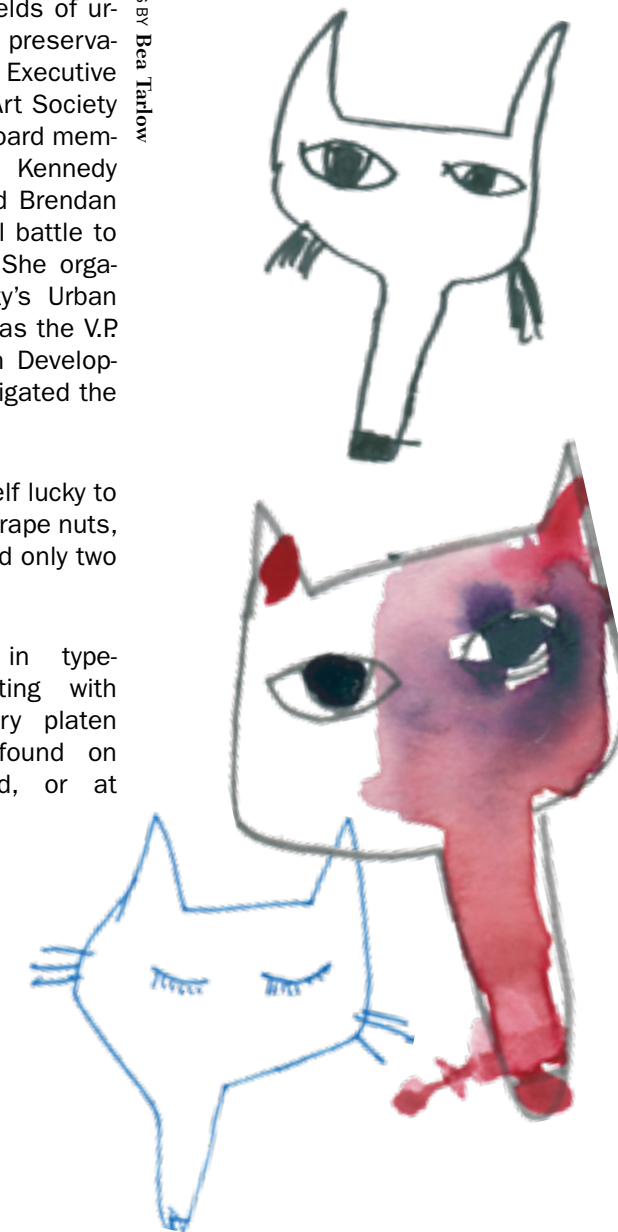
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FOKES BY
Bea Tarlow



Thank you, thank you! Göte Blomgren, Per Blomgren, Karin Hultman, Katy Porte, Bea Tarlow, Gogo Ferguson, David Sayre, Xeno and Konstantinos Kohilas, Crooked Tail, Cassie Griffin and Jess Arndt.

Xeno Kohilas looks like a fisherman and speaks like a poet. He wears a black baseball cap, denim jeans and carries a navy blue folder that he periodically jots a notation down on. His eyes are kind and youthful, his mustache grey and buoyant. You get the sense his list is as long as his day. But regardless Xeno takes a moment, sometimes many moments, to greet every single guest that walks in the door at Ikaros, his family run Greek restaurant in Baltimore.

The paper sign in the window of the original space Ikaros inhabited reads simply: *We have moved forward.* It's hard to know how old Xeno is and due to his heritage it seems of little consequence. On a tour of the second floor of Ikaros' new palatial space, just a block down the road from the original, he speaks of his island. He tells us many of the many people over a hundred lie about their age, claim to be in their early nineties. He explains that the gift of longevity is not only about what's *good for your blood.* The islanders do grow their own food and press their own wine. It's also about staying on the island.

My grandparents, both born on holidays, have been living in their house up on Columbus Avenue for just shy of a century. Bowls of pretzels and Lay's potato chips perch on every counter, cup after cup of coffee proliferate in the kitchen. AnnaMae and Carroll can't drive anymore and have maybe never even considered eating locally, but their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren rumble and tumble through the house on a daily basis to watch the game or clean the kitchen, rife with stories of their triumphs and failures. My grandfather still takes pride in his scrambled eggs. My grandmother won't let me cook dinner for them. Life, and I am grateful for this, seems never ending.

In this chapter of Diner Journal we will travel to Cumberland Island, a landscape of the generations, timeless and steeped in wild foods, hunt for fruit in Brittany, mushrooms in rural Pennsylvania and moose in the Norrland, and learn just what it takes to make a goose meatball properly Swedish. We will seek out mythology and redemption in a greek restaurant on the south side of Baltimore.

The second floor of new Ikaros is a banquet space. The dance floor is solid wood, embellished with several sparkling dolphins and a compass made of tile. When I asked him how often he returns to the island Xeno smiled and said, *Ah, but I'm there right now.* AD

Pig Island





PHOTOS BY Adrian Gaut

I have never felt less capable than I did clutching a bow, arrows in hand, perched high up in an old oak tree. It was the time of morning that is neither day nor night, and there is a still and complete darkness. As the sun slowly lifted itself over the horizon line birds began to sing and the world in front of me became three dimensional and rich. I closed my eyes and listened.

Animals that have survived this long in the wild deserve a world of respect. Humans have stripped their natural habitats, polluted their waters and soils and decimated their populations. Those that remain are considered merely pests in our modern world. The white-tailed deer, the most widely hunted animal left in America's woods, spreads Lyme disease while snacking on our cultivated gardens and frequently jumps in front of our cars. Skunks and raccoons rummage through our trash bins while mice and rats live among us, in our walls and under our homes. Squirrels are everywhere, and are actually delicious.

New England, where I'm from, was once a land where birds darkened the blue sky with their huge flocks, spawning salmon filled streams to the extent that they could be walked across and vast shellfish beds provided large amounts sustenance for our growing population.

As a part time hunter, full time farmer and adventurous eater I covet all wild game or fowl. Meat from a wild animal is packed full of flavor and very nutritious due to time spent on the run and a diet comprised of foraged foods.

Yet I had never much considered hunting in the south until meeting Gogo Ferguson, an inspired jewelry designer and gracious host. She spoke about the barrier island off the coast of Georgia where she lives called Cumberland Island that has, through generational foresight and miraculous luck, remained mostly undeveloped to this day. She told me of the families of wild horses that graze in her yard and live in healthy numbers all over the island, thriving mostly because of the cultural taboo we have created around hunting and consuming their meat. Gogo's passionate reverence and devotion to the natural world not only informs her creative work but is contagious and riveting. She spoke of white-tailed deer, armadillo, bobcats, raccoons, alligators, turkeys and wild boar. Her hard and fast rule for hunting on the island is if you kill it, you better eat it.

Two years ago I gave up raising pigs on our farm, but my quest for quality pork has never lost momentum and the idea of taking a hog in the wild called to me during the final two weeks of 2011. I decided to visit Gogo.

The modern compound bow I chose was a few steps up from what the Native Americans hunted with long ago, and proved cumbersome at first. I had only just begun to understand how to achieve limited accuracy before wandering in and out of the salt marshes, live oak trees and low hanging Spanish moss in search of prey.

After nearly two weeks lurking in the woods and watching the sunrise from various trees I heard the *oinks*. A pack of boars meandered toward the spring beneath me, their snouts buried in search of acorns and grubs. Their whole existence, not so unlike our own, was a noisy, seemingly careless pursuit of food.

The first thing I did when spying them was stand up and drop an arrow from the tree, momentarily startling them before they preoccupied themselves with the water trickling from the sulfur spring. I took one shot, which had a cartoonish arc to it as the arrow lazily flew in the flock's direction. I was sure I hit the lightest colored pig, what I guessed to be the mother. They quickly dispersed.

Following the boars into the bush, I stopped once and fired an arrow directly into a small oak tree in a final attempt to land the pig before it entered the depths of the underbrush. I dropped my bow. Filled with adrenaline I chased the hogs into a large palmetto grove, the spiked plants tearing holes in both my clothes and my arms, only to find myself face to face with a broad shouldered, brown-eyed boar with sweet nutty breath. I was three feet from this beast. Beautiful long lashes framed his eyes. I had only a moderately sized fishing knife drawn for protection. We stared intensely at one another for a long time before going our separate ways.

The pigs escaped deeper into the woods and I returned to my tree, finding the arrow, which I was sure had been lodged somewhere in that poor sow's body, sticking half-way out of the ground surrounded by fresh hoof prints and no blood.

These hogs were first introduced to America by Spanish explorers who left them on our shores as insurance for future sustenance. Cumberland Island is currently pestered by their ballooning population, wallowing and grazing habits but more significantly the hogs are an unnatural predator in the fragile ecosystem. Their most damaging impact is felt by the sea turtle community due to the hogs' uncontrollable lust for their eggs, which are mostly buried in sand dunes located on park-controlled land. A full-time eradicator, known without irony as *Shooter*, is employed by the federal parks department in an attempt to control the boar population.

I returned to Georgia in late January of this year with a pig roast in mind, making sure to reserve several small hogs from Shooter in advance. Upon our arrival he had three fifty pound pigs hanging in a walk-in cooler, deep in the woods, waiting for us.

To remove hair from the pig we built up huge flames in the fire pit, using dried palmettos, and then singed and scraped the hair from the animal, finally rinsing it with a garden hose. We rubbed it with olive oil and salt, tied it to the garden fence and left it to marinate in the evening air. We then built a tame, hot bed of coals using cedar



and splayed the hog out on a grill high above to slowly cook for about four hours, basting it with rosemary branches dipped in a mixture of garlic, chili flakes, olive oil and vinegar.

After a long slow cooking, which imparted a beautiful smoke to the flesh, and influenced perhaps by the tequila we had been steadily sipping all afternoon, we served the animal alongside corn tortillas, pickled cauliflower, pinto beans and plenty of salsa verde. The pork had a very slight gaminess that was new to me but was not undesirable, and a depth of flavor deeper than anything I had tried before.

We sat around the fire late into the evening and the temperature comfortably hovered between sweater and tee shirt weather depending on your proximity to the embers. Our hosts Gogo and her husband Dave challenged us to round after round of Texas hold 'em. And once the meat was all picked from the bones and the dinner guests had all gone home, we drove to the beach and swam in the ocean under the full weight of a winter moon.



PIG ISLAND

dinner with friends

For a year we referred to Cumberland Island as Pig island. A ferrel place. A primitive place where we would hunt our own food, roast it over a fire and slumber at the sandy mouth of the great Atlantic. We laughed nervously when we referred to it. Cumberland Island proved to be a treasure in deed, but one decidedly more refined than say, Mosquito Coast. Three days of camping under blinking stars, digging the dirt with Gogo, Dave and Hanna for clams, oysters and artifice, pillaging the grapefruit trees and cooking over a vital flame we came home inspired. Three nights of dinners ensued in the vaulted basement under Reynard's dining room. Friends old and new joined us. Chris and Sean cooked with ingredients packed and carried from the island. Andrew Mariani paired his wine with the food. We couldn't think of a name. We just called it what it was. AD | AT



Whole Hog Tacos w/ Salsa Verde + Pickled Cauliflower

a whole hog [cleaned, organs removed and bristles burned off or just a large piece of pork shoulder works well]

olive oil

salt

5 Chile de árbol [crushed]

6 cloves of garlic

3 lemons

corn tortillas

limes

hot sauce

beer

tequila

If necessary, wash your hog with a hose. When it's dry, rub the entire body, inside and out with olive oil and season aggressively with salt. You should have a hot bed of coals ready. Roast the hog over the coals, making sure it's suspended far enough above the heat source so it can roast slow and low, no burning. Mix together a couple of cups of olive oil, the chile, garlic, a cup of water or stock and the juice of the lemons. Baste the hog with this liquid as often as you can. The hog should roast, over the carefully monitored coals, turning and rotating occasionally for approximately, four hours, though the time will vary depending on your heat source and size of hog. During this four-hour roast, cook a pot of pinto beans on or near the fire.

Let the hog rest for at least an hour before you begin carving it. When everything is ready to go, toast each tortilla in a hot, dry pan, then wrap the stack of them in a clean, damp kitchen towel. Serve the pork with the warm tortillas, limes, salsa verde, pickled cauliflower and hot sauce. Additionally, a shaved winter root salad, the beans, beer and tequila round out the meal.

Salsa Verde

1 large bunch of arugula [chopped]

1 large bunch of parsley [chopped]

3 cloves of garlic

1 T salt

1 cup of good olive oil

½ of a lemon

In a mortar and pestle, pound the garlic with the salt until a paste forms. Add in the arugula and parsley in handfuls, pounding to combine. Add in the olive oil and the juice of ½ a lemon, stir, check for seasoning and serve.

Pickled Cauliflower

1 head of cauliflower

[cut into 1 inch florets]

1 quart red wine vinegar

2 cups water

½ cup salt

½ cup sugar

Bring the red wine vinegar, water, salt and sugar to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Pour over the cauliflower and let chill in the liquid overnight.

Pinto Beans

- 1 quart dried pinto beans
- 1 head of garlic [cut in half horizontally]
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 dried Chile de árbol

Soak beans overnight in water. The next day, drain off the water. Add the beans to a pot with the garlic, rosemary and chile. Add water to cover and a big glug of olive oil. Bring beans to a boil over the coals, or on a stovetop, then reduce the heat and slowly simmer until the beans are just tender. Add in a handful of salt, more olive oil and let beans rest and absorb the salt, about one hour. Serve warm.

Shaved Winter Vegetable Salad

- 5 turnips
- 8 radish
- 3 kohlrabi
- 1 fennel
- 1 fresh Fresno chile or 2 dried
- 2 grapefruit [peels and pith removed, cut into segments]
- good olive oil
- salt

Using a mandoline, thinly slice the turnips, radish, kohlrabi and fennel. Thinly slice the chile, removing the seeds and white ribbing if you would like it like spicy. Put vegetables, chile and grapefruit segments in a bowl and toss with olive oil and salt. Check for seasoning, then serve.

Kale + Feta Salad w/ Jalapeño Vinaigrette

- 1 large bunch of Tuscan kale
- 1 clove of garlic
- 3 anchovy fillets [cleaned and deboned]
- 1 lemon [stripped of its seeds]
- 1 jalapeño
- 3 T Champagne vinegar
- 4 oz feta

Strip the kale leaves off of their stems and tear into pieces. Pound the garlic and anchovy to paste in a mortar and pestle. In a large bowl, massage the kale with the garlic anchovy paste, the juice of a lemon and lots of olive oil. Really man-handle the kale so the dressing coats all of the leaves and it begins to soften. The anchovy garlic flavor should be light but also very lemony. Meanwhile, finely chop the jalapeño and combine in a separate bowl with the vinegar. Add in a glug of olive oil and a pinch of salt and whisk to together. Crumble the feta cheese over the bowl of kale, tossing to combine. Plate each salad individually, then drizzle a little jalapeño vinaigrette over each to add heat and a little punch of acid.



PHOTO BY Adrian Gaut

Roasted Oysters w/ Shallot + Sherry Butter

- 1 box of kosher or rock salt,
[to hold oysters in place]
- 16 oysters [scrubbed clean]
- 1 shallot [minced]
- 1 T dry Sherry
- 4 T butter
- 1 lemon [cut in half]
- 1 handful of chervil

Preheat your oven to 500 degrees or turn the broiler on, adjusting a rack to about 6 inches beneath the top of the oven. Line a sheet tray with about a quarter inch of salt. Shuck each oyster and place the shell top back on. Then put the whole oyster onto the bed of salt. Once all the oysters are shucked, place the sheet tray into the hot oven. Meanwhile, place a sauté pan over high heat and melt one tablespoon of butter in it. Cook the shallots over high heat until they begin to brown. Turn the flame off, add the sherry, then immediately turn the flame back on high to burn off the alcohol. There may be live flames. Melt the remaining butter in the pan. After the oysters have roasted for about 2 to 3 minutes remove the sheet tray, remove the top shells, and spoon some of the sherry butter into each oyster. Squeeze the lemon over the oysters and return the pan to the oven for another two minutes or until the poaching liquid is bubbling vigorously. Remove from the oven, allow to cool for 2 minutes, then serve four per person alongside a cold beer.





Lobster Crudo w/ Fried Seaweed

- 2 cups fresh seaweed
[rinsed and trimmed of tough stems]
- 4 cups frying oil
- 4 live lobsters
- 2 T good olive oil
- salt
- ground Chile de árbol
- the juice from 1 lemon

Heat frying oil in a small pot over high heat to 375 degrees or just before it begins to smoke. Fry the seaweed in batches until it is crisp then remove from the oil, drain on paper towels and season with salt. Swiftly kill the lobsters by cutting their heads in half. Using your hands, pull each lobster tail from its body. Reserve the claws for the following recipe or another use. Cut each tail in half vertically and using a paring knife extract the tail meat from the shell. When all tail meat has been removed, cut or tear the meat into small pieces. In a bowl, toss the lobster meat with olive oil, salt and chile until well coated. Place in the center of four salad plates, scatter fried seaweed around each plate, drizzle once more with olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt and finish with a healthy douse of lemon juice.

Bone Marrow Toast w/ Lobster Salad

- 2 cups picked lobster meat [or if you have lobster claws and knuckles leftover from the previous recipe proceed with cooking them]
- 4 four inch pieces of beef marrow bones
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 cloves garlic [peeled and kept whole]
- 4 pieces of thickly sliced country-style bread
- 2 cups frisee
- olive oil
- ½ of a lemon
- salt
- pepper

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees. Pan roast the lobster pieces with a glug of olive oil and a splash of water in a sauté pan for about 7 minutes, until just cooked. Transfer to a sheet tray, let cool, then crack the claws and knuckles to extract the meat. Reserve lobster meat until ready to use, chilled. In a shallow braising pan combine the marrow bones, chicken stock, bay leaves and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for one hour or until chicken stock has reduced to nearly nothing and the marrow bones have begun to take on color. Push the marrow from the bones with the handle of a wooden spoon. Mash the bone marrow with the garlic cloves and braising liquid. It should be the consistency of thin pea soup. Place the chunks of bread into the braising pan with the bone marrow mash, coating each piece like French toast. Add a tiny bit of water or chicken stock if it is too thick. Place the pan back into the oven for about fifteen minutes, flipping the toast half-way through, or until the liquid has been absorbed and the bread has begun to crisp up. While the bread bakes, combine the lobster meat with a slug of olive oil, the juice from the lemon, generous amounts of salt and pepper and toss it thoroughly, then briefly with the frisee. Remove the toast from the oven, while still hot place onto a plate with a generous scoop of lobster and frisee salad. Serve immediately.



Beer Braised Rabbit

- 8 rabbit legs
- salt
- pepper
- olive oil
- 4 cups shallot [thinly sliced]
- 8 garlic cloves [smashed]
- 2 bottles country ale or slightly bitter amber ale
- 1 quart of chicken stock
- 2 dried Chile de árbol
- small bouquet of thyme

Preheat your oven to 275 degrees. Season the rabbit legs liberally with salt and pepper. In large sauté pans set over high heat, sear the legs with a little olive oil, until the legs are golden brown on all sides. Transfer the legs to a deep-sided baking pan and use the sauté pans to cook the shallot and garlic. Cook over medium heat until soft and caramelized, then pour in the beer. Bring the beer to a simmer. Add in the chicken stock and bring liquid to a simmer. Season liquid with salt, pepper, chile and thyme. Pour the simmering liquid over the rabbit legs, cover the pan with aluminum foil and slide into the oven. Cook for 2 ½ to 3 hours until the meat can be easily pulled from the bone.

Farro Soup w/ Poached Oysters + Roasted Mushrooms

- olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic [peeled]
- 1 onion [roughly chopped]
- 2 cups dry farro
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 4 T butter [unsalted]
- 2 cups hen of the woods mushrooms
- 2 t fresh thyme [leaves picked]
- 2 T minced shallot
- 2 T butter
- 1 T red wine vinegar
- 12 oysters [shucked, liquor reserved]
- 4 pieces grilled country-style bread
[torn into small chunks]

In a small pot, sauté the shallot for about thirty seconds in a pat of butter, then add the rest of the unsalted butter, red wine vinegar and the oyster liquor. This will be your oyster poaching liquid and should be kept warm and bubbling slowly as the rest of the soup comes together.

In a large stock pot heat a glug of olive oil over high heat until it moves in the bottom of the pan like water. Add the garlic and onions and reduce heat to medium, stirring often until the vegetables begin to take on color, about 10 minutes. Add the farro to the pot and toast it for 5 minutes, stirring frequently, then add the chicken stock and 2 cups water. Bring the liquid to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer and cook for one hour. Remove the pot from the heat. Season with salt and pepper keeping in mind the saltiness of the oysters that will be added later. Rest the soup for 20 minutes, then puree in batches in a blender adding a knob of butter to each batch. Once entire soup is pureed, pass it through a fine strainer back into the soup pot. Keep warm over a low flame, stirring often. Soup should be the thickness of light cream. Check seasoning once more.

Next, in a large sauté pan, heat a glug of olive oil over high heat. Once the oil starts to smoke add in the mushrooms. Sear them, without crowding the pan. When they begin to turn golden at the edges, toss and shake pan. Add in the thyme and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 5 more minutes, then transfer the mushrooms to a bowl. They should have a nice color and be crisp at the edges. Set aside, these will be added to the soup at room temperature.

One minute before serving add the oysters and poach gently until they have firmed up slightly and lost their translucency. To serve, ladle the warm soup into a deep bowl, add a few torn pieces of grilled bread, scatter mushrooms on top and spoon three oysters into the soup with a spoonful of their poaching liquid. Finish with chervil and freshly cracked pepper.



Golden Beets w/ Bay Leaf Yogurt

- 5 cups baby beets [a mix of golden, striped and red, greens and stalks removed]
- olive oil
- salt
- 1 orange
- 8 fresh bay leaves
- 2 cups yogurt
- 1 lemon
- splash red wine vinegar
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 handful of mint
- 1 handful of parsley
- 1 handful of chervil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toss beets with a glug of olive oil, salt and the zest of the orange, and place in a baking vessel with just enough water to coat the bottom. Cover with aluminum foil and roast for 30 to 45 minutes, until just tender or when a paring knife can easily pass through the largest beet. Allow beets to cool down, then slip off their skins while still warm.

Meanwhile, make the bay leaf yogurt. Finely chop the bay leaves and whisk into the yogurt. Season it with salt and a squeeze of lemon juice. Let the flavors meld in the refrigerator for at least an hour, then pass the yogurt through a strainer to remove any bits of bay leaf.

The beets and yogurt can be done in advance. When ready to serve, cut the beets into halves or wedges or leave whole if very small, then dress with olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt and pepper, and toss well to coat. Add in all of the fresh herbs and toss gingerly, to distribute. Serve dressed beets on a plate alongside a hearty spoonful of yogurt. Drizzle with more good olive oil and pepper.

Caramel Ice Cream

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 4 egg yolks
- 3 T sugar
- pinch of salt
- 1½ cups milk
- 1½ cups cream

Caramel Syrup

Combine sugar and ½ cup of the water in a small saucepan over medium high heat. The sugar will dissolve, start to turn golden and continue cooking. As the syrup darkens around the edge, swirl the pan so it does so evenly. The sugar will start to bubble, turn golden and darken. When it starts to smell slightly burnt remove the pan from heat and dip the bottom of the pot into the ice bath to stop the cooking. Test a bit of the syrup on a white plate to see the color. If it isn't a golden amber color, put it back on the flame and cook it a bit more. When the syrup has cooled enough to stop bubbling, add a half cup of water and heat until the syrup is completely dissolved. Cool and set aside.

Custard Base

Whisk together the egg yolks, sugar and salt until combined then whisk in the milk. Warm this mixture in a small saucepan over very low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon until very slightly thickened. Strain the custard into a bowl, add in the cream and caramel syrup and stir to combine. Chill for several hours or overnight. Churn in an ice cream maker for about 30 minutes then pack into a plastic container and freeze for a few hours more. -MW

Roasted Grapefruit Granita

- 12 grapefruits [cut in half]
- 1 cup honey
- 6 oz water
- simple syrup [equal parts water and sugar, cooked to dissolve the sugar]

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Generously coat the grapefruit halves with honey and place cut side up on a sheet pan. Bake until the honey has caramelized and the grapefruit is soft and golden, about 30-45 minutes. Pull from oven. Remove the grapefruits from the pan and set them aside. There will be caramelized bits of sugar and fruit strands stuck to the pan along with some residual liquid, all of which you want to loosen with the addition of some water and scrape up and then pour off and reserve. It's all delicious and should make it's way back into the granita. Let the grapefruit cool to room temperature then juice them. Combine with the grapefruit juice with the pan juices and add enough simple syrup until the liquid tastes well-balanced between sweet and tart; the amount will depend on the sweetness of the grapefruits but is generally around 1/3 the amount of the grapefruit juice. Pour the mixture into two shallow wide pan and freeze; every 2 hours or so scrape up the forming ice crystals with a fork to create an icy texture. Once the solution is homogeneously icy and frozen, it is done. -EKL



recept från en
älgjägare

recipes from
a moose hunter



Sverige har en lag, allemansrätten, vilken ger människor rätt att befinna sig i och ströva fritt i naturen, även på privat mark. För många svenskar är jakt en naturlig del av livet, framför allt för de som kommer från de norra delarna av Sverige även kallat Norrland. Jakt är en del i människornas relation till naturen och till maten de lagar. Många är både fiskare och jägare. Mängder av blåbär, lingon, hallon och olika sorters svamp finns att tillgå på sommarhalvåret. Allemansrätten gäller däremot inte för jakt. För detta krävs att du äger marken eller betalar markägaren för rätten till att jaga.

There is a law in Sweden, Allemansrätten, that allows people to enter any land. It is known as right of public access to the wilderness or the right to roam. For many Swedes, especially from the northern part of the country referred to as Norrland, hunting is a way of life. It's built into their relationship to the forest and the food on their table. Many people are anglers, hunters and foragers. Bounties of blueberries, lingonberries, raspberries and different mushrooms grow lush there in the summer. Allemansrätten, however, does not cover hunting. For this you need to own the land, or pay the owner for the right to hunt.

När jag är på besök hos mina svenska släktingar i Ljusdal är älg det enda köttet vi äter. Jag var skeptisk till en början eftersom jag var så säker på att det skulle smaka allt

för starkt. De lovade mig att älg kan tillagas på samma sätt som nötkött. En tunn skiva från en kall

älgstek smakade onekligen nöt, men på något sätt klarare i smaken. Gräsigt och vilt. Göte är min pappas kusin. Han har jagat sedan 1950-talet. Vi pratade med honom om hans upplevelser. ^{-BKJ}

Hur kom du in på jakt?

Det var genom min fru. Hennes far hade en stor skog. Jag tog mig först ut med vänner och senare gick jag ut och jagade själv.

Föredrar du vinterjakt?

Nej. Höstjakt är min favorit, då vi jagar älg. Sverige har minst 350 000 älgar och av dessa skjuter vi 100 000 varje år. Men vissa jägare skjuter bara några få eller inga alls under sin jaktkarriär. I ett jaktlag delar vi på bytet. Laget jagar tillsammans; en är utsedd till ledare, en leder jakthunden genom skogen och resten av laget är utspridda, redo att skjuta.

Har du rätt att skjuta kalvar?

Ja, det är vad du bör skjuta först, så att kalvarna inte blir lämnade utan deras mödrar. Kalvarna väger cirka 100 kilo och de växer fort.

Känner du att vi människor har ett ansvar att hålla nere älgpopulationen?

Ja, jag tror det. Älgarna äter av skogen och den allt större älgpopulationen i Sverige utgör en stor förlust för skogsindustrin. Efter skogsavverkningen måste markägaren återplantera skogen och unga träd är som den mest välsmakande salladen för älgarna. Ett

annat problem med älgpopulationen är trafikolyckor. Bara under 2010 skedde det mer än 7 000 olyckor som involverade älgar, och dessa resulterade ofta i stora skador och även dödsfall.

Kan älgar vara farliga?

Ja, de är riktigt skickliga på att sparkas med deras långa ben.

Under alla dessa år, har du aldrig varit med om en skrämmande händelse?

Nej, men älgar har gått genom isen på sjöar och älvar, även fast att det är ovanligt. De måste dras upp av människor eftersom de inte kan ta sig upp på grund av deras långa ben och horn. En stor älg kan väga mer än ett halvt ton. En gång var vi tvungna att dra upp en älg baklänges med ett rep runt dess midja och för detta krävdes fem stora män. Vi lät den sedan springa tillbaka till skogen. Ibland drunknar tyvärr älgen. Det kan vara farligt för oss också.

Hur annorlunda är det att jaga hare?

Det är en längre säsong, så som med jaken på skogshöns. Haren byter från grå till vit päls på vintern, men den yttersta spetsen på örnen förblir svart. Du kan också jaga hare ensam med endast ett gevär och en hund så du behöver inte ett helt jaktlag. För mig och många andra är inte målet att skjuta själva haren. Det är interaktionen mellan mig och hunden som är intressant. Haren är mycket smart och undgår lätt hunden.

Hur ofta händer det att en björn kommer in i byn?

Ofta. Det blir ett problem när de kommer nära bebyggelsen och letar efter mat i soptunnor. Bara omkring 300 björnar får skjutas i Sverige varje år. Förutom dessa björnar måste vissa avlivas om de blivit skadade i trafikolyckor. Detta är min son Hans jobb.

Har björnarnas tillgång till mat förändrats?

Nej, jag tror inte det. På våren då de vaknat upp ut ur sitt ide dödar och äter de älg. Men på hösten äter björnarna bara växter och bär. Det är då de kommer in till byarna. Vi skjuter dem endast för att skydda oss.

Men ni äter även björn?

Ja, vi kan äta björnköttet men oftast säljer vi det.

Vilken typ av maträtt tillagar du med björnkött?

Mest grytor. Köttet kan innehålla trikiner, så man måste se till att det är väl tillagat.

Så hur blir man en jägare i Sverige?

Du behöver både ett jaktcertifikat och vapenlicens. Du får certifikatet efter att du gått en kurs och klarat examinationen.

Och sen måste du bli en del av ett jaktlag?

Ja, du tillskrivs ett visst område tillsammans med andra jägare. Vårt område är 2 300 kvadrathektar. Inom detta område kan vi i år skjuta tio älgar men antalet varierar från år till år.

Hur för du vidare dina jaktkunskaper? Låter du dina barn vara med?

Ja, när de har blivit fem till sex år gamla. Linn, mitt barnbarn, sköt sin första tjur i år.

Hur gammal är Linn? Är hon en del av ert jaktlag?

Ja. Hon är femton och en fullärd jägare.

En av dina söner är dedikerad jägare och en jagar inte alls. Är en av dem mer modig än den andre?

Nej, det har inget att göra med det.

Vad krävs att bli en jägare?

Jag har ingen aning.

When I visit my Swedish relatives

in Ljusdal the only meat we eat

is moose. At first, I was skeptical,

certain it would be unpleasantly

gamy. They assured me, moose can

be prepare the same as cattle. A

thin slice from a cold moose roast

did taste like beef, but somehow

brighter. Grassy and uncultivated.

Wild. Göte is my dad's cousin. He's

been hunting since the 1950s. We

talked to him about his experience.

-BKJ

How did you get into hunting?

My wife. Her father had a big forest. I went out with friends, and then I went out by myself.

Do you prefer winter hunting?

No. Autumn hunting is my favorite, when we hunt moose. Sweden has at least 350,000 moose. We take 100,000 each year. But some hunters shoot just a few or even none during his or her hunting career. In a hunting team we share the prey. The team hunts together; one is an appointed leader, one leads the hunting dog through the forest and the rest of the team are spread out, prepared to shoot.

You're allowed to shoot calves?

Yes, that's what you should do first, so the calves aren't left without the mother. Calves are about 220 pounds and they grow fast.

Do you feel that humans have a responsibility to keep down the moose population?

Yes, I think so. Moose eat the forest. The thriving moose population in Sweden is of great detriment to the forest industry. After logging the land owners have to replant, and young trees are like the tastiest salad for the moose. Another problem with the population

is car accidents. In 2010 there were more than 7,000 accidents involving moose, often resulting in major damage or even deaths.

Can moose be dangerous?

Yeah. They are really good at kicking with their long legs.

In all these years you've never been in a scary situation?

No, but moose have gone through the ice on lakes or rivers, although it's rare. They have to be pulled up by people because they can't get out of the hole in the ice due to thier long legs and antlers. A big moose can weigh more than a half ton. Once we had to pull one out backwards with a rope around its middle. It took five big guys. We let it run back to the forest. Sometimes they drown. It can be dangerous for us also.

How is hunting hare different?

It's a longer season, like the grouse. The hare turns white in the winter, from gray. But the very tips of the ears stay black. Also you can hunt hare alone with just your rifle and a dog. You do not need a whole team. For me, and many others, killing the hare is far from the main goal. It is the interaction between me and the dog that is interesting. The hare is very clever and eludes the dog very easily.

How often does it happen that a bear comes into the village?

Often. It becomes a problem when they get close to houses and look for food in garbage cans. Only about 300 bears are allowed to be shot each year in Sweden. Besides these bears, some have to be put down due to injuries form car accidents. That is my son Hans' job.

Has the food supply changed for the bears?

No, I don't think so. When they come out of hibernation in the spring, bears will kill a moose and eat it. But in the

autumn bears are only eating plants and berries. That's when they come into the villages. We shoot them only for protection.

But you also eat bear?

Yes, we can eat it, but usually we sell it.

What type of dishes do you make with bear meat?

Stews, mostly. It can have trichinosis, so you have to really cook it.

So how do you become a hunter in Sweden?

You need one certificate for hunting and a liscense for using weapons. You get the certificate to hunt after you have gone through a course and passed an examination.

And then you have to be part of a team?

Yes, you are assigned to an area with other hunters. Our area is 2,300 square hectares. In that area, this year, we can hunt ten moose. That number varies year to year.

How do you pass this knowledge on? Do you let the children join you?

Yes. When they're five or six years old. Linn, my grand-daughter, shot the first bull this year.

How old is Linn? She is part of your team?

Yes. She is fifteen and fully trained.

One of your sons is a dedicated hunter and one son doesn't hunt at all. Is one more rash or brave than the other?

No. It has nothing to do with that.

What does it take to be a hunter?

I have no idea.

Marinerad Älggryta

Till denna gryta kan du välja förutom älg, rådjur, hjort eller renkött. Skogssvampen kan du byta ut mot champinjoner.

Det här behövs för 4 portioner:

500 g älgkött i tärningar

MARINAD

3 dl rödvin
2 msk olja
2 krm svartpeppar
1 smulat lagerblad
1 tsk timjan

STEKNING

3 msk smör
1 tsk salt
3–4 dl marinad + buljong av tärning
200–400 g hackad förvälld skogssvamp
2–3 hackade gula lökar
2 msk vetemjöl + ½ dl vatten
1 dl vispgrädde
½–1 msk soja
1–2 msk messmör

Gör så här:

Lägg köttet i en tjock plastpåse och häll över marinaden. Knyt igen och låt den ligga i ca 12 timmar. Sila av marinaden i en skål och torka av köttet med hushållspapper. Bryn det ifett, lite i taget, och lägg över i en gryta. Salta och späd med lite av marinaden. Sjud under lock i ca 60 minuter. Fräs svampen i resten av fett till det knäpper i den. Låt löken fräsa med på slutet. Lägg detta i grytan. Sjud färdigt tills köttet är mörkt, ca 20 minuter till. Red av med mjöl utrört i vatten. Häll i grädden och smaka av med soja och messmör. Bjud grytan med ris eller potatis och någon grönsak.

Moose Stew

This stew also works with deer, elk or reindeer. Wild, forest mushrooms can replace the regular mushrooms.

1 to 1½ # moose meat, cut into cubes

MARINADE

3 cups of red wine
2 T olive oil
2 pinches freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf, crumbled
1 t fresh thyme leaves

STEW

3 T butter
1 t salt
1–2 cups stock
2 cups mushrooms [blanched, chopped]
2–3 chopped onions
2 T flour
¼ cup water
½ cup whipping cream
½–1 T soy sauce
1–2 T Scandinavian whey cheese

Place the meat in a thick plastic bag and add in the marinade. Shut the plastic bag and let it marinate for about 12 hours. When ready to cook, drain the marinade from the meat. Pat the meat with paper towels to dry. Sear in batches, in a pan with the butter, on all sides until brown. Set the meat into a cast iron pan. Add in the salt and broth. Cover and simmer for about 60 minutes. Meanwhile, fry the mushrooms, then add the onions at the end. Add the mushrooms and onions to the simmering stew and cook for another 20 minutes. Whisk together the flour and water. Add the cream and taste with soy and whey cheese. Serve with rice or potatoes.



Linn Blomgren, Göte Blomgren



Hare i Lergryta

- 1 hare [ca 1½ kg]
- 2 gula lök
- 2 vitlöksklyftor
- 1 msk. färsk hackad dragon
[eller 1 tsk torkad smulad]
- 1½ tsk salt
- 2 krm svartpeppar
- 1 msk saft av pressad citron
- 1 dl buljong
- 2 dl crème fraîche

Tina köttet om det är fryst, så mycket att det går att skära i bitar. Putsa borht innorna. Torka köttet. Låt en lergryta ligga i kallt vatten ca, 15 min. Skala och hacka löken. Pressa vitlöken Lägg lök, vitlök och dragon på botten v grytan. Salta och peppra köttbitarna och lägg dem i grytan. Droppa över citronsaften och håll i buljongen. Lägg locket på grytan och sätt in den på galler i nedre delen av ugnen. Sätt sedan ugn på 225 grader C och låt grytan stå inne c 1½ timme. Pröva att köttet släpper från benen. Ta upp köttet och rör ner crème fraîche i buljongen. Lägg tillbaka köttet i grytan och sätt den i ugnen utan lock i ca 5 min. Strö gärna lite extra dragon över. Servera med pressad potatis och en tomat sallad.

Hare in a Clay Pot

- 1 rabbit
- 2 yellow onions
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 T chopped fresh tarragon [or 1 t dried]
- 1½ t salt
- 2 pinches black pepper
- 1 T lemon juice
- ½ cup chicken or goose stock
- 1 cup crème fraîche

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Wipe the meat clean, trim off any membranes, and cut the rabbit into pieces. Let a clay pot soak in cold water for 15 minutes. Peel and chop the onion; smash the cloves of garlic. Add the onion, garlic and tarragon to the pot. Salt and pepper the pieces of meat and put them in the pot. Drizzle with lemon juice and pour in the stock. Place the lid on the pot and slide into the lower part of the oven. Bake for 1½ to 2 hours. Check the meat. When it can be easily pulled from the bone, it is done. Pull the pot from the oven. Add in the crème fraîche and stir to combine. Return the pot to the oven and cook uncovered, for about 5 minutes. Sprinkle the dish with a little extra tarragon and serve with mashed potatoes and a tomato salad.

Tjälknöl

Tänk på att tjälknölen tar ca 15 timmar att tillaga, så börja i god tid!

- Ca 1 kg fryst älgstek eller nötstek
- 1 liter vatten
- 1 dl grovt salt
- 1 tsk krossad svartpeppar
- 1 vitlöksklyfta
- 1 liten gul lök
- 2 kvistar rosmarin
- 2 kvistar timjan
- 10 enbär
- 1 lagerblad

RÖDVINSSÅS

- 1 dl råsocker
- 5 dl rött vin
- ½ dl kalvfond
- 1 msk smör
- salt, peppar

Ugn: 80-100 C. Lägg den frysta steken i en ugnsfast form. Tillaga i den nedre delen av ugnen och stek köttet i 8-10 timmar tills köttets innertemperatur är 70 grader C. Stick in en termometer i den tjockaste delen när köttet tinat. Kryddlag: Koka upp vatten och grovt salt i en gryta. Rör om tills saltet lösts upp. Tillsätt peppar, krossad vitlök, skalad och klyftad lök, rosmarin, timjan, enbär och lagerblad. Ställ grytan i kallt vattenbad för att kylas. Lägg ner det varma köttet i den varma lagen och låt det svalna. Låt grytan stå i kylan i 4 timmar. 1. Smält sockret i en kastrull, på medelvärme. Rör inte om i sockret! Tillsätt vin och fond när sockret smält och koka ihop såsen till ca 3 dl. Smaka av med salt och peppar. Vispa ner smöret i såsen. Ta upp köttet ur lagen och skiva det tunt, gärna med skärmaskin. Lägg upp på fat. Servera med rödvinssås, potatisbakelse och kokt brysselkål.

Frozen Lump

Remember that the lump takes about 15 hours to cook, so start early!

- 2½ # frozen moose roast or beef steak
- 1 quart water
- ½ cup coarse salt
- 1 t crushed black pepper
- 1 clove of garlic, smashed
- 1 small yellow onion [cut into quarters]
- 2 sprigs of rosemary
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 10 juniper berries
- 1 bay leaf

FOR THE SAUCE

- ½ cup raw sugar
- 2½ cups red wine
- ½ cup veal stock
- 1 T butter
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Place the frozen roast in an ovenproof dish and roast the meat for 8 to 10 hours until a thermometer stuck in the thickest part of the meat reaches 150 degrees. Meanwhile, bring the water and coarse salt to a boil in a saucepan. Add in the pepper, garlic, onions, rosemary, thyme, juniper berries and bay leaf. Let cool to room temperature. Transfer the roast to the brine and let it marinate for four hours, in the refrigerator. Remove the meat from the brine and slice it thinly. Then make the sauce. Melt the sugar in a saucepan over medium heat. Do not stir the sugar! Add in the wine and stock, bring to a boil, and reduce to about 3 cups. Stir in the butter and season with salt and pepper. Serve the meat with the red wine sauce, potato cakes and steamed Brussels sprouts.

Aeries

BY MAYA LAWSON

It is winter in oyster country. Sleek loons dive for fish. Mounds of rubbery sea kelp gather on the beach as fog rolls in off the lagoons. Inverness is the only part of Northwest Marin County that still doesn't have a cellphone tower. If you need to make a call, you can go to the lodge at The Pelican Inn in Tomales Bay. Someone will let you dial out on their rotary phone with a dinosaur sized hand piece. I live in Los Angeles but have just met a psychic in Malibu Canyon. She tells me that if I want to spend time with my grandmother, I better do it now. So I quit my job and drive north.

My grandparents' house is red and filled with books. It has hundred-year-old wood plank floors, and a wrought iron gate you have to remember to latch or the deer will take the open invitation to dine on the dahlias. Pop keeps wood burning in the stove day and night to heat the house. Owls, hawks and brown mourning doves land on the roof to warm themselves by the brick chimney. The branches of the tulip tree are naked. Foot long orange and white koi hide in the pond. They sleep in the reeds until it is warm enough to float to the surface again and slowly open their mouths wide.

Pop and I pull on thick socks and boots. Grandma wraps herself in a long wooly scarf and peeking out from under it she looks like a young girl. We walk beneath large oak trees up the road to visit Matey, the oldest woman in Inverness. Matey carves walking sticks out of eucalyptus branches, hangs herbs for tea from the rafters in her kitchen and feeds wild foxes. She looks like a fox, with her snowy head of hair and tiny brown eyes. She makes a clicking sound to call them, rubbing together sugar mixed with some kind of smoked meat in her hands. They come only for her, with their amber coats and dainty white paws and eat from her hand.

Their little cranberry tongues dart in and out, before they dash back into the woods. We walk to Point Reyes to go to the post office, and Whale of a Deli, and Boudin

Bakery where they keep your mug from home on a shelf if you live here. When we get back to the house, Pop gets the sherry glasses down from the cabinet and fills two with cream sherry for us, one dry for himself. We say, 'Here's to you.' And like that, clink, the day is done and no one is allowed to fight or talk about business or say anything negative for the rest of the evening. My dad said once that if that is their rule, they should take their sherry with breakfast.

When I was younger Pop would have worn a lemon yellow alligator shirt, pleated plaid trousers and puffy white sneakers. Walking out of an orange afternoon, through air thick with grill smoke, past grandkids doing cannonballs into the deep end of the pool, through purple plum trees, beds of sugar snap peas, carrots and kale, and beneath the huge weeping willow that has sheltered in its shade many forts made for blackberry eating, he would push through the screen door, letting it bang shut behind him. Stepping into my grandmother's kitchen he might lean in to kiss her on the cheek and hand her a fist-full of yellow roses, warm from the sun and crawling with ladybugs. *For you, Juliet.*

Gram wore her hair in black curls that collected like smooth snail shells against her head. She would fill a Moroccan blue vase with water, drop the roses in and set them on the oak dining room table. There would be sprouting avocado pits held half out of the water by toothpicks, and cuttings of a notorious spider plant that kept multiplying. She'd shuffle around the kitchen, eating or tasting something, talking to someone in another room or on the phone, sipping one of several lukewarm cups of black coffee she'd set down, then found again. The Tupperware drawer, too full. The wide Persian rug on the floor gathering a gentle layer of dust.

Now Gram's kitchen has become too clean and uncluttered. Pop can make toast and slather it with glops of butter, but that's about all. Friends and family drop off

lasagnas, kugels and vats of chicken broth. I pour them hot mint tea, stack their foil-wrapped packages in the freezer and wipe down the already clean counter top once again. I haven't learned to make Gram's matzoh ball soup, charoset, persimmon pudding or pear brandy with the whole fruit captured inside the bottle.

Pop no longer drives, so Mom and I take them down the winding roads past llamas and Straus creamery cows, past nesting blue egrets and marshlands, fields of wildflowers, redwood trees and finally down the highway to the Golden Gate Bridge. We cross the bay to San Francisco for her treatment. I walk up and down the hospital halls, wearing Gram's gold and opal wedding band, which she has to remove to receive radiation. I turn it over and over on my finger, like saying a mantra or prayer every time.

At dusk Pop and I sit in the living room. Gram sleeps. A cricket has snuck its way inside the house to keep warm.

It chirps then waits in the silence for a reply. When it doesn't get one it calls out again. A golden eagle circles the sky above Abbot's Lagoon. I watch it through the window, while folding a pile of cloth napkins still warm from the drier. Golden eagles are loyal to their mates during their lifetime and will look for a new mate only if its companion dies. They build huge nests, or aeries, atop tall and strong trees. Pop picks up a small wooden folk harp he keeps beside the fire and plays. His long fingers step over the strings like a spider spinning its web. When he is done with the tune, Pop shares with me a promise he's made to himself: He will be there in the morning when Gram opens her eyes. He wakes earlier than she, but as soon as she stirs, he will go in to hold and kiss her hand and like that they will welcome the day.



for passion, for brittany

written by Sanaë Lemoine

Just a half hour drive south from Rennes the land is rather flat with a few hills, vast fields of corn and wheat and fertile meadows for the dairy cows. On most days the weather is damp and grey, though the winters are gentle and the summers rarely scorch.

My grandfather, Maurice Lemoine, was raised on a thirty-acre farm in this region of Brittany. His father spent four years as a prisoner of war in Germany during the First World War, and upon his return, built a one room stone house for his wife and four sons. He used sturdy wooden beams and accommodated the space with three beds (the boys slept together), a large dresser, and a table. The chimney was where all the meals were cooked. My great-grandmother was the true matron of the house, a strong and loving woman who cooked for her family as well as the farm workers.

For lunch she prepared savory buckwheat galettes, on a wide pan heated above oak tree kindle. The galettes were rolled and dipped in warm lait barratté, also known as buttermilk and served with one or two bowls of cider from the farm. In the afternoon she carried meat stew, bread and a jug of cider to the fields where work was being done.

Maurice helped his mother with food matters. He was in charge of peeling vegetables and cooking the chicken over the chimney fire. Once a year they killed and butchered a two hundred pound pig from which they made cured sausage, pâté, blood sausage, rillettes and lard. Every week they mounted the horse carriage and fetched bread from the closest bakery. Sometimes the bread was molded and riddled with mice holes.

My grandfather left school when he was thirteen to help his parents on the farm full time. At sixteen he started tending to the horses and sleeping in the stable. The following year, when his father died in a motorcycle accident, one of his older brothers, as was tradition, took over the farm.

Not long after Maurice met my grandmother on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. She was very ill and he nursed her during the trip. My grandmother worked as a secretary in Rennes, and though she came from a humble background, her parents refused that she lead the arduous life of a farmer's wife. My grandfather was determined to marry her so he decided to open a cider company. The family farm already produced excellent quality artisanal cider, which they sold by the barrel to restaurants in Rennes. In the early fifties their cider had won a gold medal at the prestigious Concours Général Agricole in Paris.

In 1953 there was no money in the countryside. My grandmother and her friends drew black lines down the back of their legs. They couldn't afford stockings. My grandfather



was industrious. He borrowed money from friends and bought a small, run-down cider and apple brandy factory in a nearby town, Janzé.

The first years were exhausting and difficult; they worked around the clock. A few days before my grandmother gave birth to my aunt she found herself knee-deep in cider, a flood from broken barrels. Meat was too expensive and they subsisted on a diet of pasta, potatoes and green beans. My grandfather worked deep into the night, growing only the best quality apples and tinkering with different combinations of varieties, without ever using chemical fertilizers. The land around Janzé, known as la vallée de la Seiche, has a soil rich in humus, ideal for growing apple trees.

The cider that my grandfather produced was softer and lighter than ciders in other regions of Brittany, which were more acidic. Cider in Brittany is very different from Anglo-Saxon cider: it is produced with methods adopted from the traditions of French wine-making, whereas English and American versions are made with the traditions of beer brewing. The process of fermentation turns the sugar-laden apples into a mildly alcoholic (3-5%) and effervescent substance, taking on earthy characteristics with age and wild yeasts. My grandmother ran the business from the basement of their house, astutely managing the expenses and workers. Within a few years they had built a name for themselves and started selling bottled cider to bars and cafés in Rennes and along the coast of Brittany. Their cider won the most gold medals in the history of artisanal cider, a total of eight.

When he retired in 1991 and sold the cider company, rather than slowing down, Maurice moved on to a new passion, producing kilos of jams and fruit liquors. He grows or forages every fruit, finding the best pears on the roundabouts in Janzé or searching the fields for obscure fruits such as medlar. We inherited from my grandmother's parents a small plot of land on which he grows a fruit and vegetable garden bursting with carrots, leeks, potatoes, strawberries, pumpkins, many varieties of cherries and onions. He chooses greengage plums, also known as reines-claude, one by one. He leaves a CD player, blasting classical music, in the cherry trees to ward off birds. The wild plum jam has a dark amber color and caramel flavor. He makes raspberry and strawberry jam; olive-colored reine-claude jam, sweet and redolent of French summers; and medlar jelly, which can be stirred into yogurt or used to sweeten curries. There are always cherries soaking in his fiery eau-de-vie.

In his garage, my grandfather fabricated for himself an artisan's workshop. He has two burners, a deep sink, a wooden cutting board, knives and mismatched jars. He improvised, constructing an entire distillery, a single-pot still and the copper condenser out of used plumbing supplies. He built a manual cider press with parts that he salvaged from his factory.

In our family we say that the blood of a Lemoine is a stubborn one, we are often too one-minded and obsessive

when we pursue a passion. My grandfather is the perfect example: he moves forward like a bull. He's capable of staying on top of a cider tank for an entire night after a stroke, just to verify that the cider production goes smoothly, and despite his painful knee rheumatism, he will stand for hours stirring his jams and compotes. His devotion is of the spiritual kind. For hours he sits patiently watching alcohol distill while diligently writing down the recipe. My grandfather, though an immensely caring person, is a difficult man.

He is gifted the extra-sense, the intangible touch, the ability to make excellent as opposed to good. A combination of ambition, strong-headedness that borders on the unpleasant, a love for his products and a sharp intellect are all at play here. Because he left school so young, he's self-taught and is always observing or burrowing in a book, or more recently exploring the internet, to further his understanding. But most importantly he's developed a specific talent to stay attuned to nature and understand the composition of soils and the moon cycles. And I also think there is something more, a flexibility of the mind, a powerful creativity and imagination, which I see in his eloquent storytelling, a knack for anticipating and looking beyond, for finding solutions. It's a melding of artistic intuition and scientific precision that produces these marvelous artisanal products.

My grandparents spent sixty years together, forty of those creating cider. I can tell, as time goes by, that he worries about his legacy, that we won't remember, and so he urges us to eat his jams, to listen to his stories and to save the recipes. More recently he's admitted that it was my grandmother's resilience and kindness, her constant faith in their marriage despite all its disturbances that kept the machine rolling. When she was in the last stages of her cancer, my grandfather apologized saying he wouldn't be producing as many jams. We were relieved that he was finally pausing to spend time with my grandmother. But still, we saw him picking fruits and stewing. I'm not sure he was aware to what extent they formed a team; how she was a part of it all, whether it was cooking dinner, taking dozens of photos of him while he made his jams or simply urging him to stop, rest and come to bed.

To this day, my grandfather greets his guests with three kisses on the cheek, chicken roasted with prunes and chestnuts and a bottle of cider sans label. The dark green bottle crowns the table with its tart juice, freshly pressed by his simple hand-made machine and left to age in barrels out in the garage. Maurice is an artisan. He is a vintner and a storyteller. He rises early and stays awake late into the night concocting. His creations live in his cellar packed in wooden boxes, with inscriptions reminding him of the fruit to sugar ratio, the alcohol levels and the dates of when he removed the spirits from the still. They are a working documentation of his life, his very own trophy collection, reserved for family and friends. When asked why he continues he replies, "For passion. I can't ever stop."

Part of the magic of these recipes are the ingredients. My grandfather forages or grows his own fruits. The quality of fruit is really exceptional. For example, he goes out in search for these wild plums, or picks the best pears from the roundabout in his tiny town. So use the very best for these recipes.



La Prune des Bois (Forest Plum Jam)

It's a fruit you discover as you're driving along the open country roads, in the leafy areas of roundabouts and crossroads. In these spaces are planted delicious plums that I call forest plums. They are yellow, red and purple-black. The consistency of the flesh, the acidity and the thickness of the skin depend on the variety. The black ones peel easily, have firm flesh and are more acidic, whereas the yellow ones are very tender and difficult to peel but juicier and sweeter. Depending on the variety, you can preserve them in syrup with or without the pits or cook them in a pot to extract the pits but it's difficult work that demands patience, as the pits are very small.

20# plums
7# sugar

Soak and carefully wash the plums. Place them in a very big pot with the sugar and stir well. Cook on low flame for twenty minutes, or even longer, until the pits have detached from the plums. Strain everything and reserve the juice. Cook the plum juice for an hour until it has reduced to ¼ of its original volume. While the juice cooks, sort through the pits and the pulp with two spoons, separating the pits from the pulp, then add the pulp to the juice and throw away the pits. Cook for another 30 minutes until the jam is smooth and transparent. Then sterilize the jam jars for twenty minutes in boiling water and fill them accordingly.

Janzé Pear Jam

These pears come from this one roundabout, right next to the church in the small town, Janzé, where my grandfather lives. He picks them and then leaves them in a cool spot and waits for them to ripen and soften and brown. They are juicy at this point and one can extract a delicious pear juice or marmalade after cooking in water. They are called "blettes" in French, meaning overripe.

16 # very ripe pears
4½ # sugar
3 lemons
3 T pectin

Wash and cut the pears into quarters. Cook them in a pot over medium-low heat for half an hour, then pass them through a vegetable mill to remove the skin and seeds. You should have about 6 ½ pounds of thin puree. In a clean pot, cook the puree with the sugar, the juice of the lemons, and the pectin, for about 30 minutes on high heat. Pour the jam into sterilized jars. It will stay liquid, like honey but is very aromatic and flavorful.



TITLE BY Emma Young | COLLAGES BY Avery Thatcher

Nonni

by James John O'Boyle

My first memories are of my great-grandmother's kitchen, the smallest room in the house and the one in which we all spent most of our time. Nonni, we called her. Looking back, I can clearly see that her house was a shit-hole. Two floors of linoleum tile and brown carpet in a private little corner of suburban Pennsylvania. We burned trash in an oil drum in the front yard and made wine from grapes grown on a vine draped across a makeshift skeleton of skinny green pipes. This is where I was raised; Nonni raised me.

My great-grandparents were Italian immigrants whose *old world* was, despite the 'burbs, still intact. We had a vegetable garden out back where my great-grandfather (Nonno) grew tomatoes and peas in the summer. Handmade ravioli and gnocchi were staples around the house. We ate gizzard soup.

Nonni would on occasion disappear early in the morning and come home at mid-day with a basketful of mushrooms she'd foraged from the woodland behind the baseball diamond. This digression signified the coming of a great day.

I'd bide my time, going about the business of childhood: swinging from the branches of the big willow tree, finding new and exciting ways to break my collarbone, swimming in the cheap above-ground pool in our backyard. My swims were always cut short by an intense and irrational fear of sharks. Then one afternoon I'd catch Nonni performing acts of elder wizardry before a big pot on the stove, a colorful apron wrapped around her big waist, and it would hit me. There'd be polenta for dinner that night.

The big pot was for sauce made from Nonno's tomatoes. Nonni would add the foraged mushrooms and homemade sausage, bought from a distant cousin who lived down the street, and let it all simmer for hours. At dusk my folks, Uncle Eddie, Butch, Grandma Angie, Grandpa Kro and the rest of the bunch would gather around the table that took up most of the space in the kitchen, and someone would go in the back room and pull out our most important family artifact. A cutting board the exact same size as our kitchen table. It was not very big, to be honest, but not much smaller than the kitchen itself. We'd lay it out on top of the table. My grandfather would grab a decanter of red wine from the fridge where it was chilling, and Nonni would pour out the polenta.

She'd smooth the polenta out across the cutting board with a wooden spoon until it evenly covered the board out to its edges as we sat around the table, eager and hungry. Then she'd ladle the sauce out, being careful to fairly distribute chunks of sausage and mushrooms across the table. Nonni was fond of me; I always seemed to end up with a few extra pieces of sausage in my territory. Finally, she'd sprinkle it generously with parmesan cheese and we'd eat right off the table. Nonni's polenta brought us all together, which was rare, and it gave me something that I still think is one of the best things about good food. It gave me something to look forward to. Old grudges were soon forgotten, unfortunate intricacies of family history disappeared, as we ate together, each of us carving out empty space on the table with our fork.

Polenta

- 1 quart water
- 1 quart milk
- 2 cups polenta
- 2 T salt



Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Bring the water and milk to a boil and season liberally with salt. Whisk in the polenta, stirring constantly. The mixture will begin to thicken. Stir aggressively for the first ten minutes. You can continue to cook the polenta on the stovetop, stirring frequently, but baking it in the oven is much easier. Cut out a piece of parchment the size of the circumference of the pot and set the parchment onto the surface of the polenta. Slide the pot into the oven and bake for two hours. Pull the polenta from the oven and check to see if it is cooked. It should be soft and creamy, with some texture, but no grittiness. If there are gritty bits, add in two more cups of water, stir to combine, and return it to the oven to continue cooking for another hour. Remove the parchment from the surface of the polenta, letting the steam escape. Stir the polenta well. If it seems way too thick, you can add another cup or two of milk to loosen. Taste it and season again. The polenta can be served as is, or enriched with lots of olive oil, butter or cream. It's up to you.

Sausage + Mushrooms

olive oil

4 cups wild mushrooms

[any kind really, like royal trumpet, chanterelle, hen of the woods, cleaned and trimmed into bite-sized pieces]

4 Italian-style fresh sausages

1 small white onion [thinly sliced]

3 leaves of sage [thinly sliced]

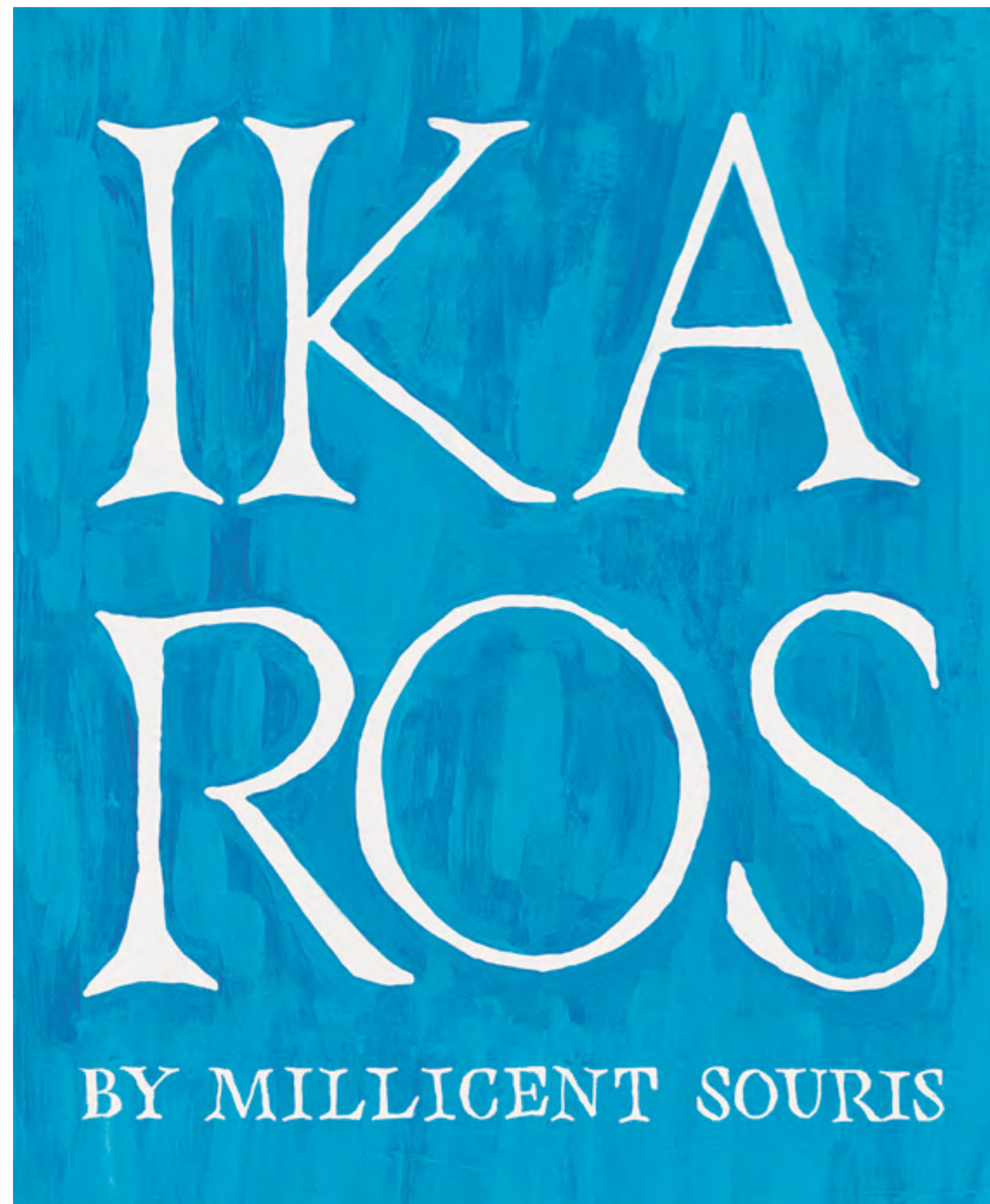
3 branches of thyme

1 cup chicken stock

1 T red wine vinegar

black pepper

In a sauté pan over high heat, heat a glug of olive oil until almost smoking. Add in the mushrooms in batches, making sure not to crowd the pan. Let the mushrooms sear hard, for almost a minute on one side, then shake and jostle the pan. Season them with a pinch of salt. Continue searing the mushrooms until they turn golden around the edges, lose much of their water weight, and begin to crisp up, about 4 to 5 minutes, then transfer them to a plate. Continue searing the mushrooms until all are cooked. In the same pan, lower the heat and add in a glug of olive oil and begin to sear off the sausages. When the sausages are golden on both sides, but not fully cooked internally, add in the onion, sage and thyme. Let the onions sear in the pan for a minute or two, then add in the chicken stock. Bring the stock to a simmer. It will reduce into a loose pan sauce, the sausages will continue to cook, and at the last minute throw in the reserved mushrooms and the red wine vinegar. Check the pan for seasoning and crack lots of freshly ground black pepper over the top. Serve on top of polenta.





My mother and father ordered saganaki every time, a dish of delicious flaming cheese quelled by lemon juice, shrimp guvetsaki and fried calamari with two sides. Lemon potatoes and string beans in tomatoes. Maggi and Molli ordered dolmas and avgolemono soup. Twins. I ordered a Greek salad, contemplating exactly how to eat the peperoncini without it burning my mouth. Eat it whole? Bite into it and drink water? Dip it into the water glass? I always ate it, and it always burned. Molli habitually stole a few of my precious kalamata olives and I'd nick an end of a stuffed grape leaf. The squid was always tender and lemony, and any dish served with feta cheese had an aggressively large slice of it perched on top. The ride home in my dad's Eldorado was spent making sure that none of the leftovers spilled out of the metal to-go containers onto our Sunday best.

Lunch at Ikaros was the most orderly and content my family ever was; everyone had a meal, a definitive liking, a part to play. We grew up in our family's bar, Souris Saloon, climbed the cigarette tar-covered taxi-dermied bear inside like a jungle gym, sipped Shirley Temples out of rocks glasses and were bribed away from the action by bartenders with quarters for the Space Shuttle pinball game. My sisters and I always wanted the saganaki, but our parents decided we were too young for it. To keep it all for themselves, I imagine.

Our favorite waitress at Ikaros was Peggy. She had red hair and rocked the uniform; white pants with the seams pressed down the front and a blue zip up polyester shirt embellished with white trim. The walls were white and lined with photographs of Greece framed all about. White boats, donkeys, old ladies in black with long thin braids, so many old ladies dressed in black. Plates illustrated

with nearly nude Olympians occupied every ledge and corner. The cash register and bar was a small space, just big enough for one person. That person was often Xeno, the owner, photographer, and one of several Kohilas brothers. He had a big mustache that curled up at the ends. There was a dining room that became a banquet room. Everybody, everybody ate at Ikaros. They wanted their party there; anniversary, christening, wedding. Something, just anything.

If we were lucky, after service at the Greek Orthodox Church of Annunciation, another Baltimore institution, my mother and father would take us there. The church is a gold standard of cathedrals, a compelling mixture of age (over a century old) with spot-on showiness (majestic stained glass windows from Tiffany's) and a corner location in Baltimore City. Mind you we didn't go to Ikaros every Sunday, just the Sundays we could all muster attendance to church. The Sundays when my father was able to get his ass out of bed early enough get us downtown. We skipped enough times that the church sent postcards asking us to return.

Nothing was better than Ikaros. The restaurant was on the other side of town, Highlandtown, past Fells Point. To form, every diner, bakery and travel agency in Greektown flies the blue and white colors, each gloriously weird junk shop is just a front for hoarders and the bar down the street was and still is dark and peddles packaged goods. Baltimore is brimming with Greeks. They get clannish, and open a restaurant, bar or diner faster than you can say cliché. My cousin thinks it's because Greeks don't like to get up early. We like the night.

My favorite thing, the first thing you saw when you walked inside the restaurant, was a massive oil paint-

ing of Ikaros falling to the sea. His wings melting apart, mouth open, eyes wide and scared, as he falls to his death in the sea that now carries his name. *Welcome to dinner. Welcome to Ikaros. Welcome to Baltimore.*

Ikaros completely influenced how I eat out now. We all ordered the same thing and had our table and Peggy our waitress. Not server, mind you, waitress. On my day off I go to places that know me and I often sit in the same spot. Hell, I sometimes even order the same food. I am easily overwhelmed by menu options. But the experience is still always a treat.

Ikaros also saved us from our mother's attempts at Greek food. The poor woman grew up on a dairy farm. She dabbled in rubbery calamari made from squid, boiled not fried, which resulted in a lingering fishy scent in the kitchen for a week. As early as six I was her prep cook, pulling horny tails and ink sacs from the translucent sea creatures.

When I started working in restaurants one aunt reminded my mother in hushed tones, "Our mother worked in a kitchen." There is supposed to be progress if a family is successful. Get out of the kitchen. Another aunt, the most delusional one, told me she always saw me in a power suit with a briefcase and pumps running up the steps to the Senate. The woman who explained it to my mother best owns the Kent Lounge, another Greek-owned spot around the corner from the Saloon. *She's got it in her blood.*

And every time I need Greek food, it is a strong and vital feeling, one that will not be diminished until met. There are no meetings to temper these urges. It encompasses so many bits of my past, including and beyond food. To this day Xeno, decades after my father's death and many

decades after my mother left him, remembers us, hugs her and sends out a complimentary dessert made of filo, honey and pistachios.

It dawned on me a few years back how formative Ikaros was for me. The world I am in now, working in restaurants, is so far away from the one I come from, even though there is an exchange of tender for food and beverage. For me the myth of Ikaros, that plummeting moment, cannot be differentiated from the restaurant, and the humility and warmth of owners. Homemade Greek food, epic hospitality, lemons, olive oil, twangy mandolin pushed from speakers, all of it. Ikaros is where I cut my teeth on restaurants.

Nowadays I probably spend almost as much time considering the narcissists as they do themselves. I'm fucked. The place I've been formed by most is named after a man who falls to his death for soaring too high.

I recently called the restaurant to ask questions. Guidance actually, on Valentine's Day lunch of all days. Xeno answered and graciously answered my many questions, even revealing their saganaki recipe and discussed the different cheeses and their best executions. At the moment I felt I was pushing my luck I told him my name, that I was Bobby Souris' daughter from Souris Saloon. He immediately answered "Ah yes. Sundays. Another lifetime ago."

And in those moments all the narcissists do fall away. Ikaros is still here. My last question for him was about the painting and why they named the restaurant after the famous myth back in 1969. He replied, knowingly, with Ikaros was, "the guy who got killed on the island where we come from."

Restaurant of Baltimore. Authentic Greek Cuisine. Indeed.



RECIPES BY Millicent Souris | PAINTINGS BY Lauren Coleman

Lemon Potatoes

The first time I made lemon potatoes was also the first day I slipped a man of the cloth a twenty for blessing the family plot. I went down to Baltimore for my father's twentieth death memorial, went to church, then the cemetery and then to the restaurant. Fold a preferably crisp twenty over, just once, in the palm of your dominant hand, just before you go to shake the Greek Orthodox priest's hand and thank him for his service. Let go.

This is also an easy recipe.

- 2 # fingerling or new potatoes
- good olive oil
- salt
- 1 lemon
- 1 bunch parsley or chives
- freshly cracked black pepper

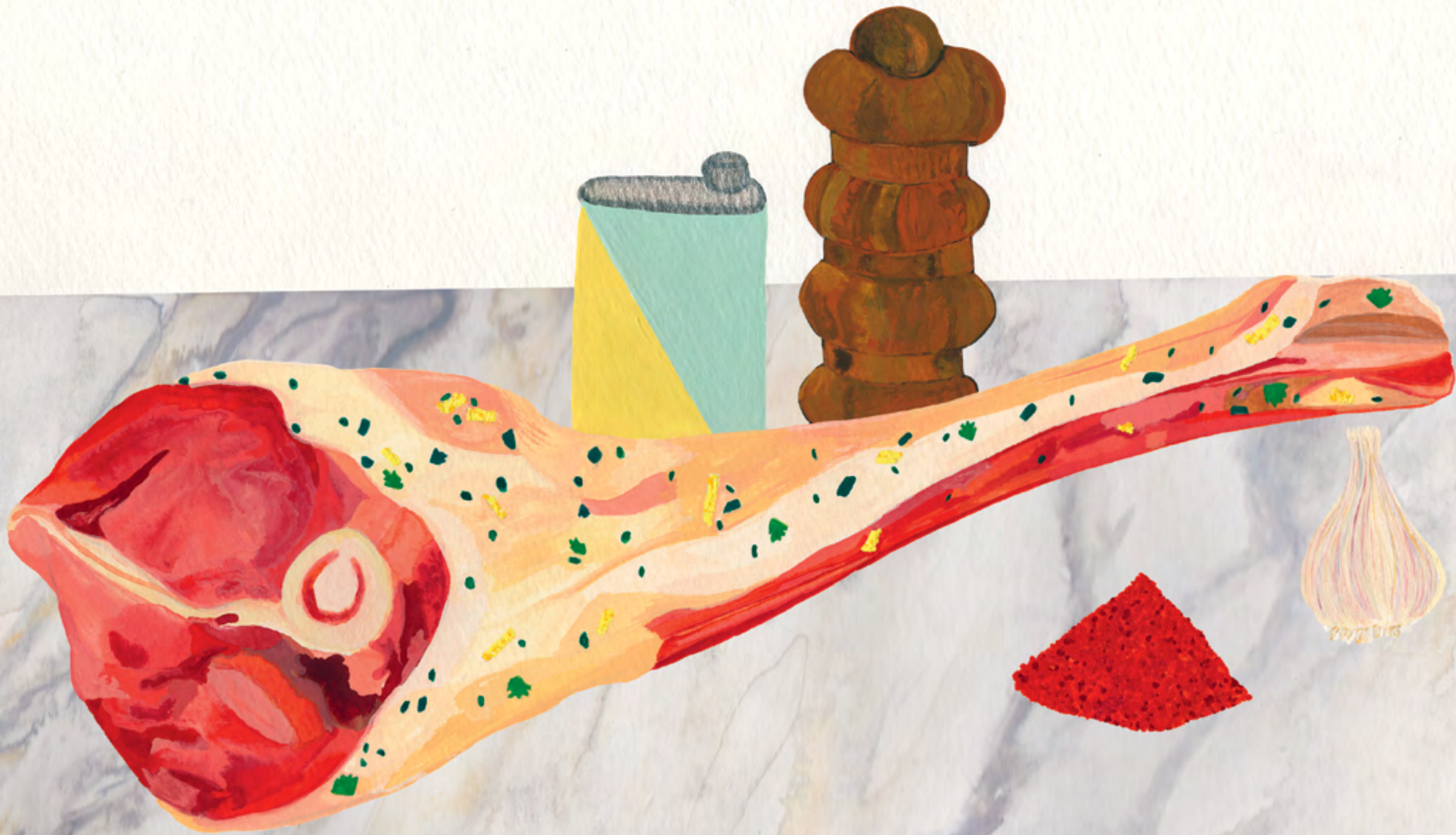
Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Wash your potatoes and put in the appropriate pan, an 8" cast iron is often the answer. You want them to be a single layer. Trim the ends of the lemon, cut into quarters lengthwise and dispose of the seeds. Slice the quarters thinly into little lemon triangles. Pour a glug or three of olive oil over the potatoes and sprinkle with salt. Sprinkle the lemons over the potatoes and toss everything together in the pan. Place in your heated oven. Check at 15 minutes. Give the pan a rattle to move things around. The potatoes will get a little crusty, but that's good. The potatoes are done when you can easily slip a paring knife through the largest one, about 22 to 38 minutes. Finish with chopped parsley or chives, season with more salt and finish with freshly cracked pepper. Feel free to toss them with some greens like red russian kale, mustard or dandelion. These do not have to be piping hot. They are excellent room temperature.

String Beans w/ Tomatoes

- good olive oil
- 8 garlic cloves [smashed]
- 6 cups of green beans [trimmed]
- 5 large tomatoes [chopped]
- 1 Chile de árbol [crumbled]
- 1 pinch of oregano

In a large shallow pot, heat about a cup of olive oil over medium heat. Add in the garlic cloves, stir to incorporate into the oil and cook until they turn golden and fragrant. Add in the green beans, tomatoes, chile and oregano, and season aggressively with salt. Cook the beans and tomatoes over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, at least 15 minutes. The beans will turn bright green and the tomatoes will be watery at first. Continue cooking until most of the tomato water has evaporated, the beans are quite tender, and olive oil starts to pool at the surface, about 15 more minutes. Check the beans for seasoning, add more if needed, and finish with a glug or two more of oil. Best warm to room temperature, not piping hot.





Roasted Leg of Lamb

Hey there, buy a meat thermometer, okay? It's nice when meat falls apart, but it's also great when it doesn't like in this leg of lamb recipe. If you're worrying there is too much lamb, well, don't. Make gyros the next day.

4-6 # boneless leg of lamb

1 preserved lemon

small bunch of parsley

even smaller bunch of oregano

small bunch of mint

15 sprigs of thyme

7 cloves fresh garlic

½ cup good olive oil

3 T sumac

salt

pepper

Marinate your lamb the day before you cook it. Taste the preserved lemon. If it's oppressively salty rinse the rind. Then quarter it, cut out the pulp and finely chop the rind. Pick and clean all the herbs, dry and coarsely chop them. Chop the garlic fine. Mix the herbs, garlic and lemon together. Add the sumac and olive oil. You want to hand chop everything so you don't make a paste, but rather a rub. If there is an intense fat cap on the sirloin trim it down a bit. Clean up in the inside of the lamb leg by trimming off any membrane or silver skin. Season it liberally with salt and pepper and rub the inside with half of the marinade. Roll the leg together and tie it with kitchen twine to stabilize and standardize its shape so it will cook and cut more evenly. Rub the rest of the marinade on the outside of the lamb and refrigerate overnight.

Bring your lamb out to sit at room temperature for an hour before you roast it. Preheat your oven to 425 degrees and salt and pepper the outside of the lamb. Place your seasoned and rubbed leg fat side up, on a rack in a roasting pan. When the oven is hot put the lamb in. Check at 15 minutes; once you achieve a lovely brown crust drop the temperature of your oven to 350 degrees. The lamb should roast about an hour, but can vary, so check the temperature often. For medium rare pull the lamb when the thermometer reads 125 degrees in solid parts. Carry over cooking is not a myth, it is real. Let the lamb rest, for 30 minutes, both to finish cooking and to reabsorb the juices. Slice the lamb thin, across the grain.

Avgolemono

1 chicken

olive oil

salt

pepper

1 onion

2 shallots

5 cloves of garlic

1 bunch thyme

1 bay leaf

1 sprig rosemary

1 Chile de árbol

handful of kalamata olives

3 lemons

1 glass white wine

1 quart chicken stock

1 cup arborio rice

4 eggs separated

Get a whole chicken. You can ask your butcher to separate the legs and breast. But take the carcass with you to make stock. A good practice. Most store bought stock is garbage.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Peel the chicken skin from the breasts. It should peel off in one piece. Lay the skin on a sheet tray lined with parchment paper and season them with a little salt and pepper and a drizzle of olive oil. Cover with another sheet of parchment and another sheet tray. Bake for about 90 minutes or until golden and slightly crispy. The skin will continue to crisp up after you pull it from the oven.

Meanwhile, season the chicken legs aggressively with salt and pepper. In a cast iron pan over medium-high heat, sear the legs until golden brown on both sides. You want a nice orange brown color. Remove the chicken from pan and set aside. In the same pan, add in the onion, shallots and garlic and cook until translucent and sweet. Add in the herbs, chile, olives, one lemon cut in half and the chicken legs. Add in the wine, bring to a boil, scraping up any bits stuck to the pan. Add in the stock and season with salt and pepper. Cover the pan and throw it in the oven for 90 minutes. Meanwhile, take the chicken carcass, add it to a small pot of water and bring to a simmer. Add in the rice a large



pinch of salt and cook until just tender, about 20 minutes. Discard the liquid and carcass but reserve the rice. Pull the chicken from the oven. Check the tenderness with a paring knife; if it slides through the leg easily and the knee joint is loose, then it's done. Strain the stock into a pot and set aside the chicken. Re-season broth if necessary. Add in the juice of one lemon. Pick the chicken meat from the bones, set aside.

Separate the eggs, then whip the whites until they form medium peaks, then whip in the yolks until it turns into a homogenous pale yellow foam.

When ready to serve, bring the stock to a simmer. Pour one ladle of the warm broth into the egg mixture, whisking all of

the time to temper the eggs. Then whisk the eggs into the stock to incorporate. Add in the rice and the pulled chicken meat. Taste and adjust with more lemon or salt, if needed. It should be lemony and rich. Serve garnished with freshly picked thyme, the chicken cracklins and a drizzle of olive oil.

Saganaki is not hard to make. It's hot crusty cheese. But there are a few hazards here. At Ikaros they make saganaki

Saganaki at Home

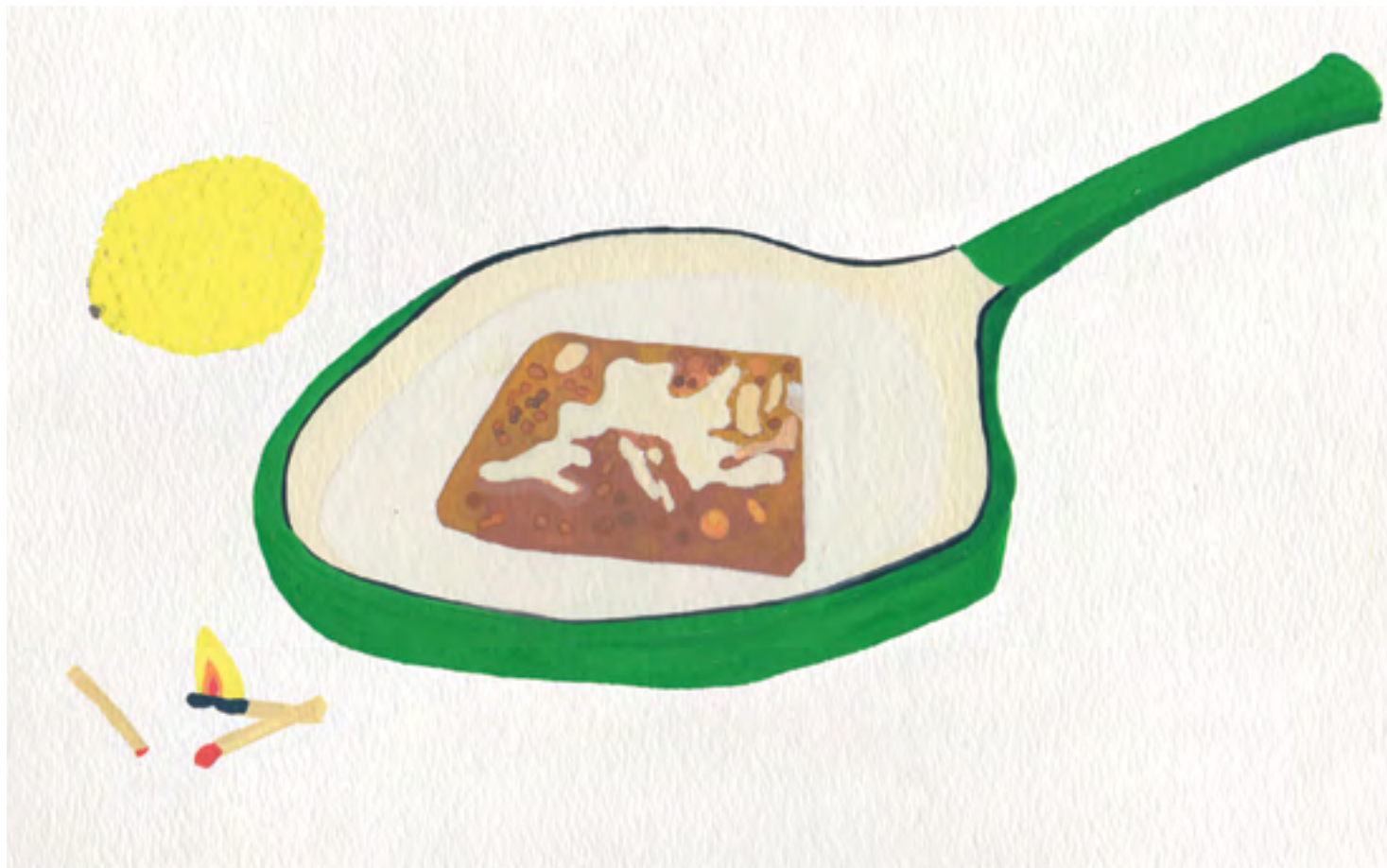
ki with an industrial strength broiler. Pan searing cheese in a good amount of hot extra virgin olive oil is the way to do it at home, but it is going to smoke up your kitchen. I would dismantle the smoke detector right before cooking this, and of course safely reinstall it immediately after. Open a window, get some air going. You need your pan to be hot. You need your oil to be hot, and a good amount of it.*

extra virgin olive oil
 8 oz Kafalograviera or Kefalotyri cheese
 2 eggs [beaten]
 1 cup flour
 1 oz Metaxa + Grand Marnier
 1 lemon
 freshly ground pepper
 a loaf of crusty bread

Cut the cheese into ½ inch thick slices. Dip each slice of cheese in the beaten egg, then in the flour, shaking

off any excess. Heat a cast iron pan with enough olive oil to cover the bottom of it over medium high heat. When the oil starts to shimmer place two or three slices of the cheese in carefully. You should hear a sizzle; if you do not, turn the heat up. After a minute or three you should see the color on the bottom of the cheese start to darken and brown. When the entire side is browned carefully flip the cheese, so the oil doesn't splatter on you, to the other side for two or three minutes, until golden brown.

*The other hazard of saganaki at home is setting it aflame. Some restaurants do this at the moment they yell, "Opa!" at the table. Thankfully Ikaros has never done that, and I suggest you follow suit. They do use a combination of the Greek brandy Metaxa with a little bit of Grand Marnier. Pour a combination of the two into a shot glass. Put the cheese in a flame resistant vessel, have two halves of lemons ready, pour the booze on it and set it aflame. Do not say Opa. Then squeeze a half a lemon over it for seasoning and fire extinguishing. Finish with cracked black pepper and a lot of bread.



bea & the paella

BT | AT | TITLE BY Emma Young



BY MEGAN AUSTER-ROSEN

MY MESHUGE MISHPOHKE

There was an old lima bean farmer who lived with his two grandchildren—a girl and a boy. Every morning the farmer would get up and go out to his field. He would plow the field and then he would plant the lima bean seeds, cover them with dirt, and water them. Soon enough the seeds would sprout, and voila, there would be lima beans. So the farmer and his grandchildren would go out and pick the lima beans and they'd bring them home and cook them for dinner. They would cook delicious lima beans and everyone would eat them. After dinner everyone would go to the bathroom and make a BM and then they would flush the toilet. And the lima beans would go back into the dirt so the farmer and his family could plant more lima beans.

This is a story my grandfather told me right before bed every time I slept at his house in Boca Raton. We'd drive around the "the club" grounds in my grandparent's golf cart and eat a mediocre and extremely expensive dinner at the dining hall. Just before bed we would sing his WWII army songs and finally arrive at the most important part of the evening; the Lima Bean story. I eagerly awaited the scatological payoff. Why a farmer? Why lima beans? Why BM as opposed to some other word for shit? I have no idea. I don't even know why he so diligently told us that story. I suppose that was my grandfather's way of teaching

me about the circle of life, or where food came from and where it goes, or perhaps farm to table. In any case, it always felt like an important part of our relationship and when he was on his deathbed surrounded by crying and grieving loved ones, I thought of that story and most inappropriately and uncontrollably laughed aloud just before he died.

The fact of the matter is no one in my family would ever eat a lima bean. We are a group of the most finicky eaters, each with our own idiosyncrasies and particular demands. My grandmother was born in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. She was the youngest of seven children, all of whom shared one bedroom in a tenement building on the south side. The seven grew up to have varied gradations of mental illness ranging from schizophrenia to sociopathy, but as children this merely manifested as individualized dietary requirements. Even though they were poor during the Great Depression, my great-grandmother prepared eight separate plates of food and then one for herself that remained in the kitchen where she ate alone. Food was scarce during my grandparents' childhood, but Jewish holidays were always characterized by great abundance and indulgence. My grandmother fondly recalls coming home at Passover time to a carp swimming in the bathtub waiting to be ground into gefilte fish.

By the time I was born, holiday meals evolved into exorbitantly grotesque feasts that left us full for days. One Passover my grandma sent me and my mother shopping and when we looked at the grocery list we discovered we were sent to buy twelve chickens (one kosher), five pounds of string beans, fifteen pounds of brisket, enough dairy and noodle products to make eight kugels and twenty-one bags of baby carrots. TWENTY ONE bags of baby carrots. Only eleven people were scheduled to be coming to the seder that year. But it would have been better to not return at all than to show up, God forbid, one chicken short. That would have been a *shanda*.

When family meals aren't being cooked at home in excessive quantity, we eat out at either Piccola Venezia, a mobster Italian joint owned by a Croatian named Ezio in Astoria or Sammy's Roumanian Steakhouse in the Lower East Side. At *Piccolo*, as we all call it, we dine in a private room where we can't disturb the other customers, who may or may not carry a .45 and have a shovel tucked in the trunk of their tinted-windowed Lincoln Town Car. Ezio, a rotund lilliputian with slicked back hair, would greet us and slap the ass of one of his burgundy tuxedoed lackeys to escort us to our table.

As my family trickled in, Belbog, the Yugoslavian waiter whose mustachio extended well past both sides of his face, would yell at us for being late and then respectfully greet my grandfather who paid for all the family dinners. He would then scream the menu right next to my grandmother's ear.

"What???" she would yell. "Can anybody understand what he's saying?"

"Mrs. Auster," he would yell back, "you will love the veal francese."

"Veal? What kind of veal?"

"FRANCESE!"

"Does anyone know what he's talking about?"

"Just order it Ruth!" My grandpa would cut in.

"Alright, alright," she would acquiesce. "But extra lean and well done."

Belbog would in turn choose what each of us ate, and my grandmother and all of her sisters would then send back their food several times complaining that it was not well done enough or too fatty, or, after several rounds, burnt. At some point, while chugging his Wild Turkey Sour, my

grandfather would finally yell, "RUTH, just eat the damn food!" and Belbog would slap my grandfather on the back in gratitude. At the end of the meal, as my grandmother sipped on her Baileys and the rest of us ate Baked Alaska and Napoleons, Ezio would come by and my grandfather would say, "Ezio, you're beautiful," and Ezio would say, "No Mr. Auster, YOU are beautiful."

On the most special occasions, my family convenes at my cousin Stanley's restaurant, Sammy's Roumanian Steakhouse. Sammy's is located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, which, in the 1980s, was teeming with prostitutes, drug-addicts and criminals. It is rumored that the original Sammy was a gambler who lost the restaurant in a bet and, within a month, Stanley had acquired it. Sammy's is like a constant Bar Mitzvah in a seedy casino basement in Reno. From the moment you walk into the restaurant, you are bombarded with songs like "I love Shikses" and "Hava Nagila," performed live by Dani Luv, a balding Israeli who looks like he died several years ago and has been hitting on my little sister since she was three.

Once inside Sammy's we were welcomed by varnished green bagels hanging from the ceiling, brown and rotten business cards and photos peppering the plywood basement walls, and Cousin Stanley. Cousin Stanley drove a

ILLUSTRATED BY Ted Mineo

Rolls Royce to work, was always George Hamilton tan, and was never without a brandy glass filled to the meniscus with premium single malt scotch. He'd peer over his tinted gold glasses with a lemon puckered look of disgust as he greeted us.

All tables would be elaborately decorated with old-fashioned seltzer bottles, bowls of half-sour pickles and maple syrup dispensers filled to the brim with Schmaltz. A set of Jew-fro-ed triplets separated at birth, who had discovered one another in New York and saw fit to all work at Sammy's, would serenade our table with doo-wop and mo-town. They went on to open their own restaurant called "Triplets" which failed miserably. Stanley would make the rounds in the restaurant, insulting and/or complementing his patrons and showing them pictures of the miniature ponies he kept at his house in Ft. Lauderdale, while his pierogi shaped wife sat in the corner looking bereft and miserable.

Soon enough everyone would be chomping on pickled peppers and shooting Belvedere vodka encased in ice when the karnatzlach would arrive. Karnatzlach are beef and veal patties troublingly reminiscent of turds, are a family favorite and are labeled on the menu "for garlic eaters only." We were also presented with Kreplach, Jewish dumplings, and Kishka, beef intestine stuffed with matzoh meal and schmaltz. In addition, the triplets would deliver stuffed cabbage to the table. They knew not to put it near cousin Ira because it gave him gas, which, it was agreed, made the night less pleasant. Every course was punctuated with Stanley wandering over to our table, bejeweled fingers resting on his protuberant paunch, asking us mechanically how the meal was and then remarking that it didn't matter anyway because he was giving us a discount.

Helium filled balloons were tied to empty seltzer bottles and my brother and I never missed an opportunity to make use of them, inhaling the helium and singing tunes from Fiddler on the Roof. Grandpa thought it was hilarious, grandma feared we would have aneurisms. We'd tie sugar cubes to the balloon strings to make them just the right weight to hang in mid air.

Dani Luv would yell, "Odem yesoydoy meyofor vesoyfo leyofor—beyne-leveyne iz gut a trunk bronfn." Man begins in dust and ends in dust— meanwhile it's good to drink some vodka. Then he'd sing MC Hammer's "Can't Touch This" with a Yiddish accent and a Klezmer intone and we'd all get up and dance the hora. By the middle of the evening, octogenarians would be swinging T-bones in the air as they danced in circles. Grandpa was always at the forefront. He'd go into the middle of the circle and make up his own routine while everyone cheered. People on the sidewalk peered through the Sammy's dirty basement windows to try to see what all the commotion was about. He'd pull my grandma up and she'd yell "My hair!!!" She didn't want any of her hairsprayed hairs to

move out of place. But she would ultimately surrender and grapevine around the restaurant with the rest of us.

Entrees would arrive. Garlic-covered skirt steaks that hung over both ends of the long elliptical plate, oozing juices and fat onto the table and laps of our family. Mashed potatoes covered in greeven, crisp pieces of chicken skin, and schmaltz, as well as potato latkes, fried onion and garlic, a LOT of garlic, broccoli. Ira inevitably ate the cabbage and we'd give him a wide berth as he made his way to the bathroom. Aunt Joyce, flanked by her ex-husband and current husband, would tell everyone the story about when Uncle Kenny folded her into the couch and then comment on how, because of this meal, she was now too fat to sit on the couch, let alone be folded into it. Cousin Sheldon would start twitching and yell at his sons Lance and Troy to "lay off the sauce" while his wife, the other Joyce, who my mom always referred to as a "sour-puss," would cake on more makeup.

When we were all stuffed and several years closer to that triple bypass, Dani Luv would do a perfect Louis Armstrong, singing "It's a Wonderful World," guttural and scratchy, and Grandpa would ask me to dance. He'd pick me up off my chair and slow dance with me. Sometimes Grandma would join, and I would be suspended between their polyester pot-bellies in a perfect moment of Jewish grandchild bliss.

Finally, the rugelach would arrive and Stanley would yell to the triplets to bring the U-bet chocolate and milk. Two empty glasses would be placed before me and my brother. Stanley would sidle over, tell us to fill our glasses half full with milk, and then he'd stand above us with his short arms stretched heavenward, clutching the choco-



late sauce and with perfect aim squeeze ungodly heaps of chocolate into our cups. He would then cue Dani Luv to gather everyone's attention and grab a seltzer bottle. Standing on a chair or alighted on the lap of a customer across the room, he'd take aim, and with the aplomb and precision of a surgeon, he'd shoot the seltzer into our glasses until it bubbled over. The restaurant would erupt into applause. Stanley would kiss the gold ring that attached all his fingers and swig back the last of his scotch.

Since I was a kid, a lot of things have changed. The Lower East Side has transformed into a wealthy haven for the nouveau riche. Family members have passed and other ones been born. Stanley moved to Tahiti with his new and much younger wife. And my family still makes an annual appearance at Sammy's when my grandma and her best friend and caretaker Chichi are in town from Florida. Even though Stanley's son David and Dani Luv are still there, it feels slightly foreign and different without Stanley. Family dinners are quieter without my grandpa.

At the end of every Sammy's dinner, Grandpa would call me over and say, "Mamaleh—watch this," and he'd tickle my grandmother's neck and she'd scream and slap his hand away yelling "Get outta heeaaaaah" and we would double over in uproarious laughter. My family would put on our coats and Grandpa would say,

"Megalah—have I ever told you I love you?"
"Yes Grandpa, a million times."

"Well I don't think I've said it enough. I love you."

"I love you too Grandpa."

Grandma would give me a million kisses until my face was covered in pink lipstick. Joyce and her two husbands would leave together, trying to avoid Ira who was crop dusting the restaurant entrance. Stanley would finally smile as he put his fedora on his greasy head, hand some kid a wad of money for watching his car and step into his gold Rolls Royce, clearly satisfied that he wouldn't have to see us again for another few months. My brother and I would watch through the window as my dad staggered out and tried for fifteen minutes to get our Volvo's engine to turn over.

While we waited, sometimes we'd convince our grandpa to tell us the Lima Bean story. And even though I really have no idea why he saw fit to tell me that story as a child, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will recite it to my children and grandchildren. And if they ever ask where that story came from, I'll tell them my grandfather. And if they ever ask why he made up that story, I'll tell them it's just a part of our family. Like Piccola Venezia and Sammy's. *Our meshuge mishpokhe.*

Aunt Pat's



RECIPE BY Pat Griffin | ILLUSTRATION BY Liza Corsillo | LETTERING BY Siggy Bodolai

The meat is best super fresh.
If it is frozen a tad it does slice well.
Our geese were eight months old
noisy as hell
and ended up as
Sausage patties
meatballs
Pate
Stock.
Half the breast went to jerky.
The other left for steak.
Hearts and gizzards and anything
left over fed the pig.

1 # of goose breast

[skin removed, sliced into ¼ inch thick slices]

2 T brown sugar

1 clove garlic, smashed to a paste

1½ t onion powder

¼ t black pepper

½ t sea salt

½ t ground ginger

½ t ground turmeric

½ t dried thyme

½ t dried oregano

¼ cup soy sauce

⅛ cup maple syrup

⅛ cup celery juice or 1 t celery salt

[this ingredient is essential to preserving the meat]

the juice of 1 lemon

Mix together all of the dry ingredients. Season the breasts well on both sides with the spice mix. Mix wet ingredients together in a shallow dish. Lay the seasoned meat in the marinade, making sure all pieces come in contact with the liquid. Marinate in the fridge for 24 hours. When ready to dehydrate, preheat the oven to 200 degrees. Pull the meat from the marinade, shaking off any excess moisture. Lay the strips on a metal rack or cooling tray and slip into the oven. Bake the meat with the oven door slightly ajar for 1 to 1½ hours, checking to see that the pieces do not overcook. They should be dry to the touch and will shrivel considerably. Let jerky cool at room temperature, then store in a cool, dry place or in the refrigerator.

DUCK.

Butcher goose. Grind de-boned legs and breasts, skin on. We added a few handfuls of unrendered duck fat. You can substitute pork fat if unavailable. Take bones, roast in the oven until golden brown. Stuff into a pot, cover with water and simmer for 3 hours. Strain and cool. Caramelize onions, shallots and garlic with a bouquet of thyme, rosemary, bay and juniper. Pulse in a robot coupe or give a rough chop. Grind star anise, cinnamon, juniper, allspice, coriander, black pepper and orange zest. Soak bread in a bit of the stock until fully absorbed. Mix goose, garlic, shallot, onion, bread and spices together with fresh chopped thyme, chili and salt.

Cook off a small patty in some olive oil to test the seasoning and how well the meat is holding together. If falling apart soak more bread and add it. Another alternative is to add a little egg.

For the gravy, make a blonde roux, refer to La Gastronomique, the encyclopedia of fine French cooking from the 30s that's gathering dust on the shelf. One part butter, one part flour. Thin out with goose stock, cook on low heat until flour taste cooks out. Add grated gruyère. Stir until homogenous.

Serve with fresh cranberries macerated with sugar, sea salt, black pepper, thyme, squeeze of fresh orange and zest.

Boom.
-Lee

DUCK.

Yeah, we pulled lots of buckshot out of those geese. So, it goes: butcher, pull, check for pellets, then grind. Also do you need instruction on pulling plumage or does Scar Jar already have that?
-Lee

Hey chefs,

Do you think that you or one of your minions can formulate a goose meatball recipe for the Journal? Bummed I didn't get to try them but they sounded great. We still have time... but getting it in early is good.

Also, any other wild game recipes you might be thinking about- venison chili, buffalo steaks au poivre, squirrel hash?

Tell Lee too!
-Scar

This is one of those dishes that comes from the three of us having a conversation, almost a joke even. Andrew offered the geese and I almost felt like a pussy if I didn't act excited to have them, even though we were totally over-ordered on proteins already. These things work out though. We were wondering what we could do with the geese, knowing they'd be pretty gamey and Nick had the brilliant idea of meatballs. Who doesn't love meatballs? Putting all that other stuff in the grind would tame the flavor a bit too. And then I remembered the time we made Swedish meatballs, AND THEN we put two and two together and realized we had a Swedish Goose (Anna Gustavi) on staff that night and that that shit would be really fucking funny. So it was immediately decided that we'd make them in honor of "The Goose." Awesome.
-Ken

Don't forget the part about checking for all the pellets. And how Anna "The Goose" Gustavi talked shit about lingonberries. And add the garnish!
-Ken

GOOSE MEATBALL

After we managed to make, roll and braise the meatballs, the question became how to serve them in the restaurant? We asked Anna, the aforementioned Swedish Goose, who laid out the following conditions for serving swedish meatballs: gravy, potatoes, lingonberries. In an attempt to avoid any comparison to the food court at Ikea, we set about trying to combine these ingredients in any way that wouldn't result in a big pile.

For the final presentation, the meatballs were warmed in their braising liquid and plated four per dish, each ball being about golf ball sized. Using a bit of rendered duck fat mounted into the flavorful braising liquid, we made a quite fowl-y gravy, a really rich poultry flavor, spooning one dollop over each meatball as the sauce. This also served to keep each ball in place and kept them from rolling around the plate.

I'll write up the garnish tomorrow. Meet sometime next week and put it all together? Maybe some gin would help?
-Nick

Oh man, do I know about plumage?! You got to pawn your plucking off on the butchers. It took me almost three hours! Difficult, tedious work perfect for adolescents and criminals. Starting at the sternum you grasp a tuft of feathers firmly between thumb and fingers and jerk it out. Each clump makes this strange tearing sound, like tearing a pillow in half. It's somewhat unnerving but the feathers are so soft and shiny that it actually makes for a tactically soothing experience. However, in the middle of plucking, with clouds of feathers swirling around outside, I inhaled a speck of down and spent the next twenty minutes hacking and coughing, bent over trying desperately to expel the feather from my airway. The goose strikes back! What's the garnish?
-Scar

Scar!
We will drink some gin and get together a recipe for you, from all of us with love.
Honk honk.
-Ken

The next hurdle was a lingonberry substitute. We didn't have any on preserve and we certainly didn't know where to get any fresh this time of year. We used dried cherries which we poached in white wine with mustard seeds, but in retrospect, macerated cranberries, the larger, less juicy, and tarter lingonberry cousin would have been a better fit. We finished the plate with watercress, dressed simply with lemon and olive oil. Any bitter green will work here however. For the potatoes, we used very small peeled yukon potatoes (1 inch diameter), boiled them in the meatball braising liquid to cook them, and served them in a bowl, with a little braising liquid and fresh parsley.
-Nick

Goose Meatballs in Brodo w/ Herbs

- 1 goose
- 1 cup very cold rendered duck fat
[cut into cubes]
- 2 small red onions [halved]
- 3 shallots
- 1 skin-on head of garlic [cut in half]
- 1 bouquet of thyme
- 4 quarts chicken, duck, or goose stock
- 1 star anise
- ½ stick of cinnamon
- 5 juniper berries
- 3 allspice berries
- 1 t coriander seeds
- ½ t black peppercorns
- 1 orange [to zest]
- 3 slices of good bread [crusts removed]
- 10 sprigs of thyme
[leaves picked and finely chopped]
- 1 large pinch of ground Chile de árbol
- 1 T salt
- olive oil
- 3 T butter
- 3 T flour



PHOTO BY Scarlet Lindeman

Pluck and butcher goose. De-bone the legs, cut the breasts, skin on, into pieces and grind meat into a small-medium grind, adding handfuls of duck fat along with the meat. Take the goose bones and roast them on a sheet tray in a hot oven with the onions, shallots, garlic and thyme. Once the bones are golden and the vegetables are caramelized pull from the oven. Add bones to a pot of simmering poultry stock, to reinforce. Pulse the onions, shallots and peeled garlic in a food processor until finely chopped. Grind star anise, cinnamon, juniper, allspice, coriander, black pepper and orange zest in spice grinder until finely ground. Tear bread into small chunks and place in a large bowl. Pour a ladleful of the warm stock over the bread and let sit until fully absorbed. Add the ground goose meat and spices to the bowl. Add in the thyme, chili and salt and start mixing the ingredients until everything is fully incorporated and somewhat homogenous. Form a small patty of the mixture and sear it in a small pan with some olive oil to test the seasoning and to see how well the meat is holding together. Add in more salt if needed and mix again. If the meatball seems to be falling apart, mix in two beaten eggs. Sear off another little patty and make adjustments again.

Roll out 2-inch meatballs and set them on a sheet tray rubbed with a little olive oil, so they don't stick. Once all of the balls are formed, sear them on all sides in large sauté pans, greased with a little olive oil, over medium heat. When each ball is nicely browned transfer to a deep baking dish. Cover the meatballs with the warm stock, season stock with salt to taste and cover with aluminum foil. Bake the balls at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes, until just cooked through. For the gravy, melt the butter in a medium saucepan. Add in the flour and whisk until combined. Cook this roux until it starts to turn golden brown, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add in about 2 to 3 cups of warm stock and cook on low heat until the gravy starts to thicken slightly. Thin out the gravy with more stock if it becomes too thick, then season with salt and pepper. Serve the warm meatballs in a bowl with their gravy. For more pop, macerate two cups of fresh cranberries with sugar, sea salt, black pepper and a squeeze of fresh orange juice and zest, to serve on the side. And some small boiled potatoes that have been cooked in goose stock. Garnish with parsley. — Lee|Ken|Nick

Goose Pâté

3 T olive oil
4 shallots [minced]
2 goose breasts
2 goose legs [deboned]
1 goose liver
¼ cup gin
1 t juniper berries [crushed]
½ t freshly grated nutmeg
2 T salt
1 t crushed black pepper
2 eggs
1 # duck fat
3 bay leaves

In a sauté pan over medium heat, sweat the shallots in the olive oil with a pinch of salt and pepper until soft and translucent. Set aside. Cube the goose meat and liver and pass it through a meat grinder or grind in a food processor until coarsely ground. In a large bowl, mix the ground goose meat with the reserved, room-temperature shallots, gin, spices, salt, eggs and duck fat until thoroughly blended together. Scrape the mixture into a ceramic terrine pan, pressing down firmly to compact it. Press the bay leaves onto the surface of the terrine and cover with its lid. Set the terrine in a larger baking pan and fill the pan up with water, up to half of the side of the terrine pan. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees and bake the terrine in its water bath until an instant-read thermometer stuck into the center of the terrine reaches 155 degrees, about 1½ to 2 hours. Remove the terrine from the oven and let rest for an hour. Place the terrine on a baking sheet to catch any spills, then place a large sheet of parchment paper over the surface of the terrine. Place another terrine mold or pan the same size as the terrine on top of the parchment paper and set a couple of heavy cans inside the second pan, to act as a weight. This will press and compact the terrine while it's cooling. Place the entire double pan tower into the refrigerator and let sit overnight. The pâté will be fully chilled the next day and ready to serve with crusty bread and cornichons. -SL

Goose Confit

Confit is a preservation method as well as a great starting point. Confit meat can be stored until you need it, then can be pulled from the vessel to use in cassoulets, stews and salads.

6 goose legs
¼ cup of salt
sprigs of thyme
cracked peppercorns
4 garlic cloves, smashed
4 cups rendered goose or duck fat,
 or a combination of

Season the legs with salt, thyme, peppercorns and garlic. Place in a shallow container and let cure overnight in the refrigerator. The next day, preheat oven to 225 degrees. In a saucepan, slowly warm the goose fat until it is liquid. Brush the cure off of the goose legs and place them snugly in a pan large enough so the legs will be completely covered by the melted fat. Pour fat over the legs and slide pan into the oven. Cook slowly until the goose legs are tender and the meat can be pulled from the bone, anywhere from 3 to 6 hours. Remove the pan from the oven and let chill completely, before storing in the refrigerator or a cool, dry place. -SL

Braised Goose w/ Leeks, Bacon + Prunes

Depending on the sturdiness of your goose, braising time can vary wildly, anywhere between three and eight hours. Best made a day or two in advance, left to chill, then reheated.

2 goose breasts
2 goose legs
salt
pepper
5 strips of bacon [chopped]
4 leeks [sliced lengthwise, cut into 3 inch segments and rinsed of any grit]
1 white onion [diced]
1 carrot [diced]
1 rib of celery [diced]
5 garlic cloves [smashed]
4 dried porcini mushrooms
2 cups red wine
2 cups goose or chicken stock
bouquet of thyme
2 bay leaves
10 prunes

Season the goose meat liberally with salt and pepper. Let sit in the refrigerator for at least four hours or overnight. In a wide cast-iron pot set over medium heat, add in the bacon and start to render the fat. Five minutes in, add the goose breasts and legs. Sear the breast skin-side down until golden; sear the legs on both sides then remove from the pot and set aside. Add in the leek, onion, carrot, celery, garlic and porcini; cook until the bacon is crispy and vegetables start to brown. If there is more than a cup of rendered fat in the pan be sure and pour off half of it. Deglaze the pan with the red wine, scraping up any bits stuck to the pan. Bring to a simmer. Cut the breast meat into chunks, add to the pot with the legs and any accumulated juices. Add in the stock. Season the liquid with salt and add in the bouquet of thyme and bay leaves. Cover the pot and cook at a low simmer, checking occasionally to stir the pot and assess the firmness of the meat. Goose meat can take up to eight hours of slow simmering to become tender; four to six hours is common. When the breasts feel tender but the legs are still firm, add in the prunes and simmer for one more hour. Let the braise chill in the pot overnight. In the morning, scrape off any accumulated fat and discard. Warm the braise, check the seasoning and serve. -SL

Stuffed Wolf

or *Permanent Midnight**

A good part of life, it seems, is going to be about trying to understand the people we come from, and the subsequent unpacking of who that means we are. We invent clues.

One of my dad's favorite places is inside the American Museum of Natural History's Hall of North American Mammals. The dioramas there figure animals drinking at pools of water, picking up their head from a nap in the sun, balancing on a craggy mountain ledge. They are spectacular works of taxidermy and realism, the kind of art which is opaquely about feeling like you are really there. To that end, they're the perfect expression of armchair scientists and their fascination with a civilized animal kingdom. One diorama just leans toward something different.

A pair of wolves bound through a pass, evergreens on either side, the aurora borealis behind them. The spectacle in the sky is painted there for people who like to feel they know something about natural phenomena; the wolves don't take any notice. Their coats glisten over engaged muscle. They are closing in on a deer in the front-lit diorama of a wintered Gunflint Lake, Minnesota, and they are running toward the glass.

You get in the corner and sit on your heels. It starts with the sound of cracking knees (his, mine) and then the low, wooden railing is suddenly at chest level. You're looking at their eyes, and their teeth aren't bared, but it doesn't matter. From this view you can feel the momentum of their run and the unsympathetic hum of the boundlessness we call nature.†

I ask my dad what this means to him. He describes his father's relationship to the wild on their farm upstate, deer in the cornfield and wolves in the henhouse. He tells me about going to New York to see this diorama many times as a kid. How eventually he left the farm for a better life, consulting, flying around the world. A life that wasn't tied to the land at all. For my dad the wolves are honor, the hunter and the hunted, and the eternal.

I think about how what I've learned from him about the chase, about striving, is at the same time the fear that we share, the anxiety of being caught and of running out of time. Maybe we're drawn to the diorama because in quiet moments we see the world the same way, that the wolves are at the door, and we relish the opportunity to be on the other side of the glass and look that down.

Then I think, who cares? What does the search for understanding ourselves get us? In the hall, we're just there together, where it's always the same moment. We're hanging out in the perpetuity of geekdom, and we're just imagining. I look for answers and come up with the desire only to go back. Sometimes the place you know best is the one you've never been to. LC

*After the 2/6/13 AMNH blog post of the same name on the restoration of the wolf diorama after its energy-efficient lighting installation was completed in the fall of 2012. The lighting changes required painstaking re-touching of the forest floor with colored marble dust to keep up the simulacra of paws mid-air, the lighting of the moon, the way shadow falls on fallen snow.

† This place is intense at any age. Stephen C. Quinn, museum artist on the effect: "If the dioramas here at the American Museum's Hall of North American Mammals are to evoke a sense of wonder, and mystery and magic, certainly the wolf diorama is one, I think, that really meets all of those definitions." Please also add: adrenaline, childhood nightmares, hunger, neutral brutality.