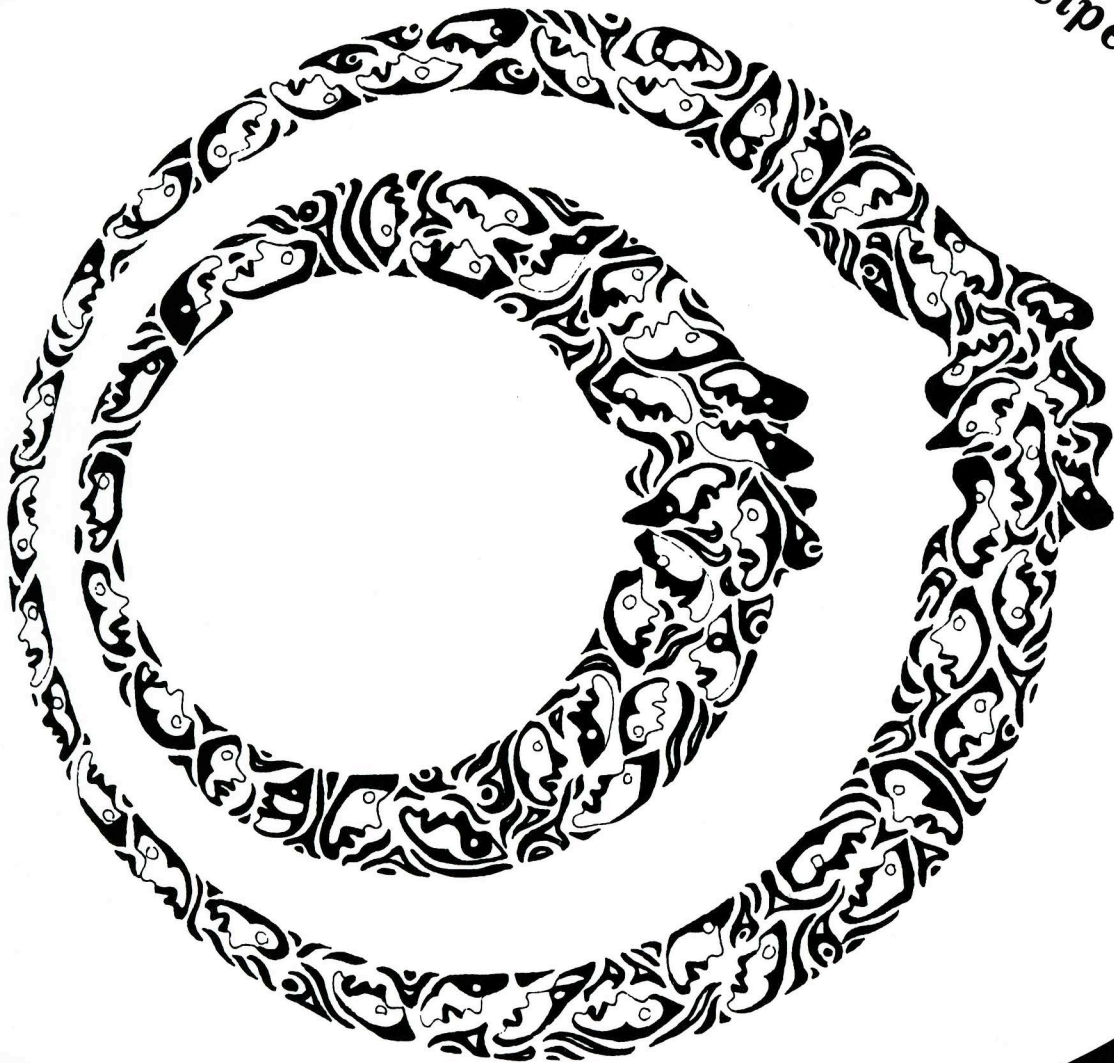


# *waiting for the dough*

*writings, drawings, and non-prize-winning recipes*



*phyllis goldin & wanda brown*

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*Bon Appetit!*  
*Phyllis and Wanda*



waiting for the dough  
phyllis goldin & wanda brown

table  
of  
condiments

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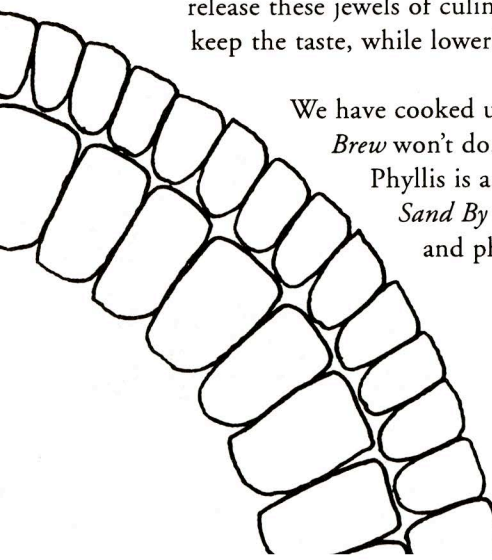
# pre- nibble

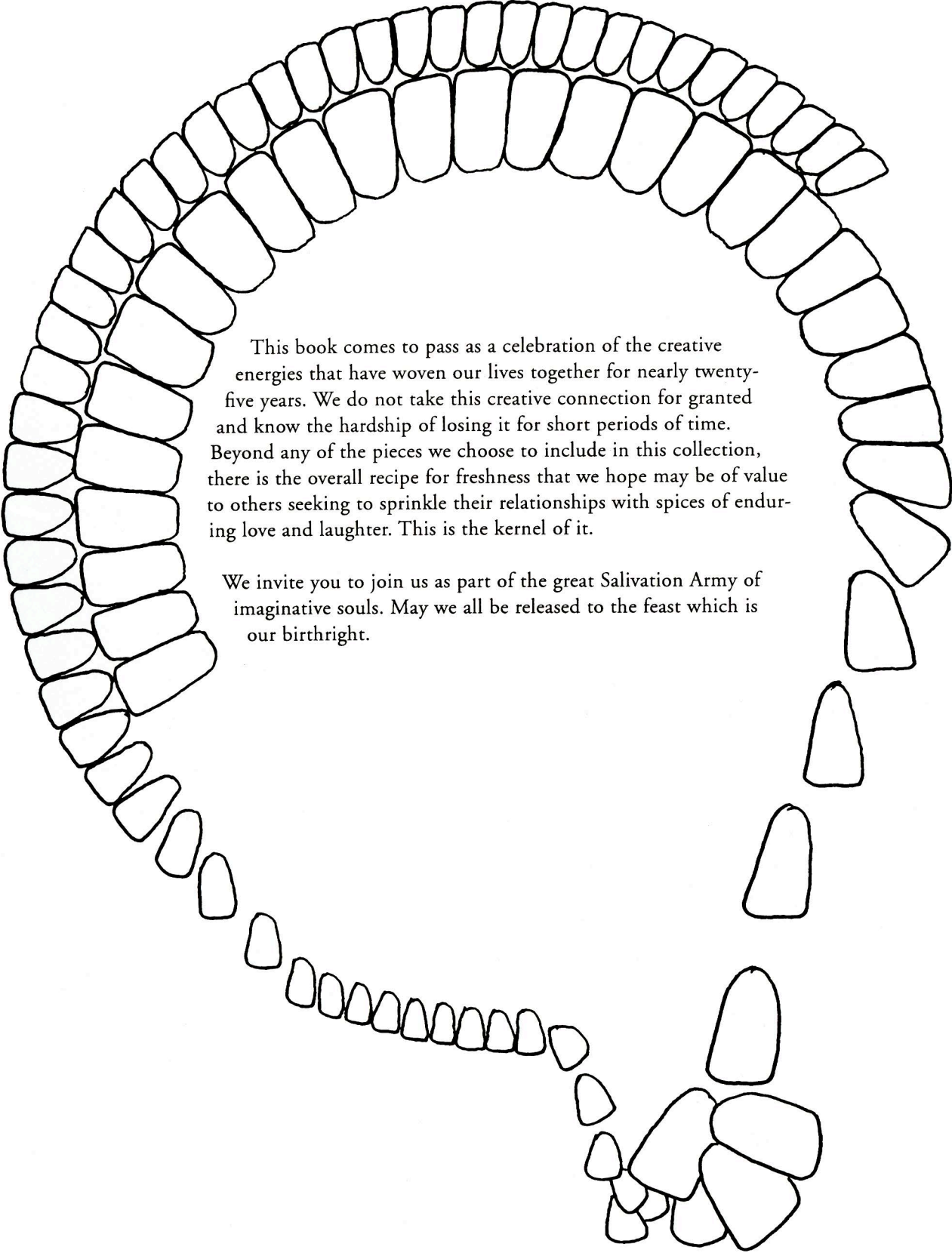
**Food,** the great redeemer of every day, save the days of Lent and Yom Kippur. Food, the great passion people have killed for, died for, sung for, hung for, rung for: the quintessential, exposed passion of all time. And, unlike its chief rival, sex, a passion honorable as a solitary pursuit. Yet, recent times have garnered more and more advocates for safer satiety and more intrusions on private choice. We are all admonished by guardians of longevity not to salivate over Hollandaise, bechamel, ice cream or pie. We are supposed to know, by osmosis, the secret herbs and spices of the East which confer culinary supremacy to rice without adding calories or fat. Every day we learn that we are saved or doomed by everything from carrots to olive oil. This is rough treatment for passion.

This book is written, drawn, assembled and taste tested by Phyllis Goldin and Wanda Brown, partners in life and creative exploration since 1974. When we use the pronoun “we,” it means the two of us. In the poems and other writings, the author is identified by an icon: ♀ for Phyllis, ♂ for Wanda.

Phyllis is no quitter. Some years ago she heard the call to creative cookery. Ever since, whenever the challenge is interesting and time permits, she enters recipe contests. Phyllis is the recipe queen, Wanda the lucky eater. Friends now treasure these nonprizewinning recipes. The time has come to release these jewels of culinary passion to you, our hungry audience. Wherever possible, these recipes keep the taste, while lowering the schmaltz.

We have cooked up some calorie-free literary dishes for those moments when *Rhapsody in Brew* won't do. This collaboration is our best recipe for fun and freshness. In real life Phyllis is a psychiatrist, an artist, songwriter and composer, with three recordings: *Sand By Sand*, *Spring Thaw* and *Strings Attached*. Wanda is a sales consultant, poet and photographer, who often sings along.





This book comes to pass as a celebration of the creative energies that have woven our lives together for nearly twenty-five years. We do not take this creative connection for granted and know the hardship of losing it for short periods of time. Beyond any of the pieces we choose to include in this collection, there is the overall recipe for freshness that we hope may be of value to others seeking to sprinkle their relationships with spices of enduring love and laughter. This is the kernel of it.

We invite you to join us as part of the great Salvation Army of imaginative souls. May we all be released to the feast which is our birthright.

**an appetite for fun**

**1.**

a package arrives from my sister at Christmas  
one item is wrapped in newspaper  
not the colored comic pages  
but plain black on white  
inside is a loaf of bread  
rounded, the shape of a bowler hat  
the accompanying note reads  
“Eat it right away while it’s fresh”

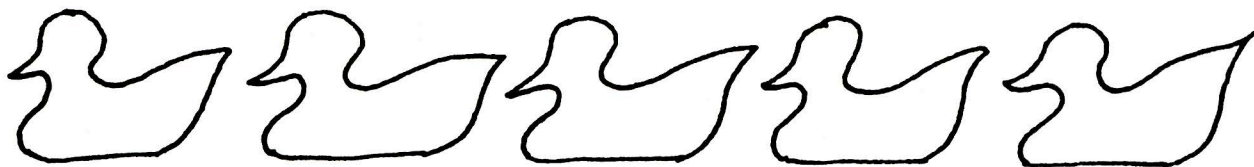
this is what Grandmother named simply  
brown bread  
I have not tasted its plain flavor  
in twenty-five years, maybe more  
it is not nine grain bread  
pumpkin seed bread, sour dough bread  
or anything you would buy at Café Latté

## bread ducks

this is humble  
its dense, simple texture has no market  
holds no surprises  
it is not sweet, almost bitter  
meant to be eaten fresh  
hot, unadorned

I call my sister  
“Karen, this bread is Grandmother’s recipe.”  
“Yes,” she says  
across a thousand miles  
“it has no salt.”

I cry over the taste  
of Karen’s bread  
remember Grandmother  
baking in Mother’s kitchen  
I was a young girl, wearing two long braids  
I stood on a chair  
as Grandmother kneaded dough  
she told stories of her life  
Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales  
recited poems, sang songs  
in Danish and English  
I listened, laughed, sang

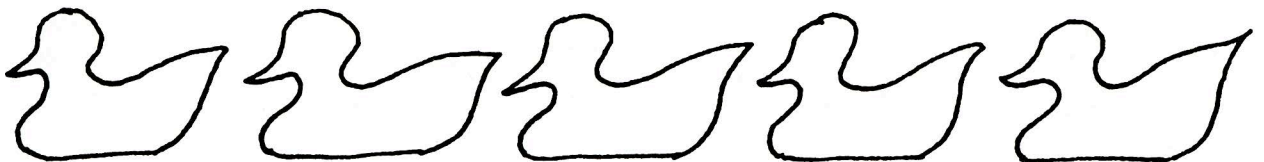


“When will the bread be done?”  
I admired her big strong hands  
blue veins standing tall  
fingernails rough  
wedding band plain gold

on her right hand was another wedding band  
smooth gold and very thin  
when Grandfather died in 1945  
she took his ring  
said he wore it down from  
working so hard on the farm

I imagined what kind of work  
wore down a wedding band  
thought about it as a lifesaver  
which, when sucked gently  
without chewing  
became so thin it broke in my mouth

these two hands  
with one thick, one thin ring  
folded and pressed dough  
I stood watching  
Grandmother’s cheek turned white with flour  
pushing her glasses up  
with the back of her hand  
“When will the bread be done?”  
smiling at my impatience  
she pinched off a piece of dough  
handed it to me  
“Now I will show you how to make  
a little duck.”  
she pinched off a piece for herself



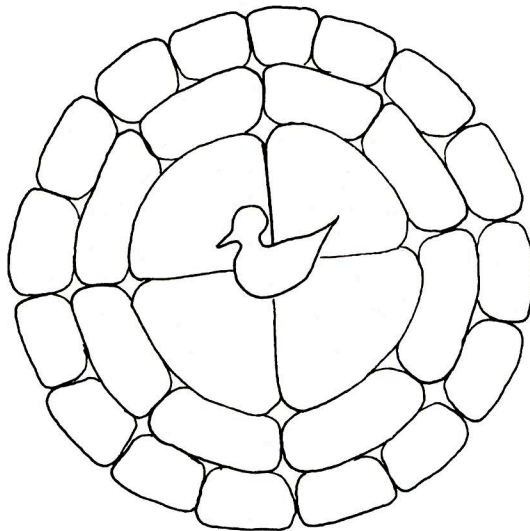
we broke the dough into three pieces  
one smaller than the last  
rolled two pieces into little balls  
the bigger ball we pressed onto the top  
of a loaf, now in its pan  
the smaller ball on top of that  
the tiny piece became a beak  
a toothpick made two eyes  
Grandmother's thumbnail carefully etched  
a wing on each side

into the oven they went

now bread takes forever to bake  
but ducklings cook very fast  
in a few minutes we opened the oven door  
enough for Grandmother to reach in  
snatch them from their nests

while loaves finished baking  
we sat at the table  
eating hot bread ducks  
smiling

sitting in my kitchen today  
Grandmother gone all these years  
I see an impression  
on this loaf  
where a little duck perched





## **herb bread**

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 lb. loaf frozen whole wheat bread dough
- 2 Tbsp. fresh Rosemary cut in small pieces, or dried Rosemary (or use dill weed or any combination of your favorite herbs)
- Olive oil—use right out of bottle

### **DIRECTIONS**

Leave frozen dough in plastic bag in refrigerator for about 36 hours, until it puffs out in the bag. Release dough from bag onto working area. Work Rosemary into the dough, distributing as well as you can.

Place on large, non-stick cookie sheet and press dough to an oval shape about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. Cover top and sides liberally with olive oil. Indent the top with your fingers to hold some oil. Heat oven to 200° and turn off. Cover dough loosely with cloth and place in warm oven until dough rises to twice the size. Remove from oven. Heat oven to 350°. Remove cloth and bake for 15 minutes. When fresh out of oven, brush the whole bread liberally with olive oil. Cut into wedges and serve warm. (Do not butter.)



karen's angels



In childhood pictures I am touching you  
in candid shots with my hand  
in posed ones with my eyes  
our middle sister sits between us  
on the front steps of the duplex  
3149 Grand Avenue South

three little blond girls  
in matching white blouses  
plaid jumpers, sharply pleated skirts  
1954, I am three, looking at you  
you are eight, almost a grown up  
about to lose your angels

you walk home from Lyndale School  
clutching a nickel ice cream cone  
remembering to finish it completely  
before arriving at our front gate  
not to upset two little sisters

we three sleep in the back bedroom  
your world is filled with magic  
soft pink angels hover above you  
in the corner by the door  
protect us all  
I never see the angels, I am watching you

I do not know  
that as a child playing outdoors  
the angels speak to you gently  
live with you neither in imagination nor memory  
but in the present, visible, audible  
you know your life is blessed  
I watch your every move  
touch you when I can  
you are my safe place

everything glows from inside  
for you the angels  
for me the picket fence Dad built  
floating above the sidewalk  
so white on summer days  
people have to look away  
Mother's bridal wreath flowers the same

from inside a plastic plate  
beneath the bathroom light switch  
a small, orange neon x illuminates the night

fresh oatmeal raisin cookies radiate  
from the cookie jar, call to us  
one by one we rise at midnight  
eat them at the kitchen table together

the red leather rocking chair hums deeply  
glows on a maple floor

we move in January  
with our new baby brother  
leave behind everything that glows  
picket fence  
bridal wreath  
neon night light  
warm cookie jar  
deep red rocker  
all your angels

no one thinks about the angels  
no one misses them  
cries for them  
searches for them  
but you, still



# avocado devils

## INGREDIENTS

4 large, hard boiled eggs (peeled)  
1/4 cup ripe avocado (mashed)  
1/2 tsp. lime or lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. lemon pepper  
1/8 tsp. salt  
2 spare Tbsp. chopped walnuts  
pimento or sweet red pepper  
small capers

## DIRECTIONS

Slice hard boiled eggs in half lengthwise and remove yolks.

Mash half the yolks together with avocado (save remaining yolks to decorate a salad).

Add other ingredients, except walnuts, and mix well.

Stir in walnuts.

Fill egg white halves.

Decorate with pimento or red pepper "horns" and capers for eyes to look like devils.

Serve at room temperature.

Makes eight.



# *HUmboldt9-6090*

The radio today reported that  
generations are separated by significant events  
who was alive December 7, 1941  
where were you when John Kennedy died  
when Saigon fell

I think what distinguishes generations  
is whether your childhood phone number  
began with numbers  
or a word

not letters, but a whole word  
full and round  
someone's name  
JEfferson  
or a concept  
JUstice

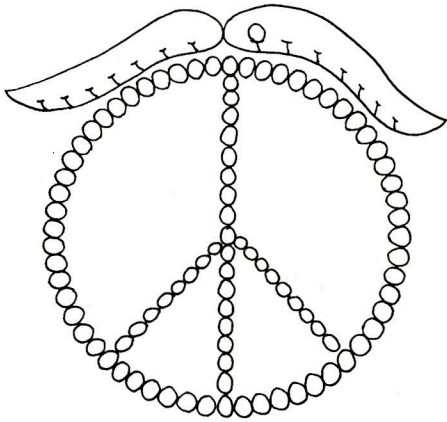
just as everyone 45 or better  
can tell you  
who first uttered the words to them—and where—  
“Kennedy's been shot,”  
so can they recite a childhood phone number  
in their sleep

mine is tattooed on the thumb  
of my first baseball glove—  
I stood on tiptoe  
peering over the workbench as  
Dad heated a nail  
and carefully burned in HUmboldt 9-6090



# disturbing the peas

I am arrested for disturbing the peas  
hauled off in my apron  
pots left to scorch



The past, a litany of narrow escapes  
from the crucible of judgement  
Why have they failed to notice  
my innumerable beatings of eggs  
discrimination against white sauce  
whipping of cream

I might long since have been sent up  
for panslaughter  
oppression of the marjoram  
severing the right wing  
of a dead duck

On my way to trial  
toes turned inward  
I have nothing to say

They find me guilty  
in an open and shut case  
of tampering with the pod  
releasing the tender young  
too green for loyalty  
unwilling to fight for God or Country  
wanting only to be peasful





## peas porridge

### INGREDIENTS

2  $\frac{1}{3}$  cups water  
vegetable or canola oil, a few drops  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. saffron threads or 1 tsp. turmeric  
1 cup pearled barley  
2 cups frozen peas  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup reduced calorie Italian, cucumber or ranch  
dressing (or salt, pepper and your choice of herbs)

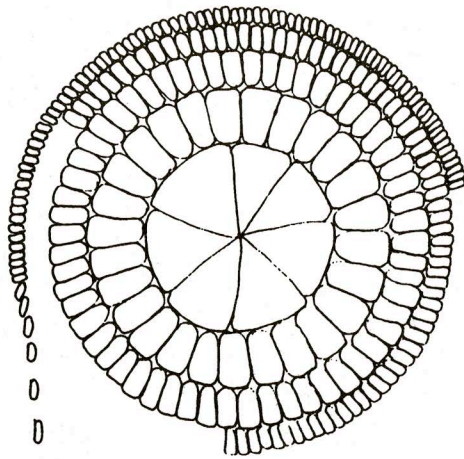
### DIRECTIONS

In medium saucepan, combine water, a few drops oil, and saffron. Bring to a boil.  
Add barley and cover.  
Reduce heat to low and simmer for 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours.  
Turn off burner, stir in frozen peas and dressing (or seasonings).  
Replace lid and let stand until peas heat through.

Serve hot or chilled. Lasts at least nine days refrigerated.



*pure corn*



*thailand*

Among the joys of our travel is a growing collection of exotic recipes. From the Cajun spices of New Orleans, to the peppers of Mexico, to the curries of Thailand, the world bursts forth with an unending array of savory delights. The only trick is to construct the recipes in the face of language barriers and unusual ingredients.

One such challenge occurred in October, 1989, on the island of Koh Samui in Thailand. But, hang on a second. You should know that we arrived in Thailand after spending ten days in Japan—one of the great culinary capitals of the world. It was hard to believe that food could be more tastefully or aesthetically prepared than in Japan. Thailand, however, quickly revealed its ancient history of near-religious devotion to food preparation. And, unlike in Japan, in Thailand it was often possible for us to observe the artists at work.

The first morning on Koh Samui we left our thatched beach cottage to wander the palm-studded sand in the light of tropical sun rising over verdant hills into a deep blue sky. A sweet ocean breeze wafted over us as warm waves caressed our feet. This beach could easily compete in an Eden on Earth

contest. There were no tall buildings—only simple bungalows and two-story hotels blending into the pristine environment.

Before long we arrived at an open-air restaurant and decided to stay. As we were the first customers, we had our choice of several tables with unparalleled ocean views. An accommodating man quickly

brought us menus with many unusual choices. I don't recall whether we

had a curry dish or Pad

Thai (the delicious spiced noodle dish) that morning.

Everything else was diminished by the pineapple pancakes that commanded all our appreciation. The pancakes were large, both fluffy and crispy, filled with chunks of sweet, fresh, warm pineapple.

We didn't bother to use the honey served

on the side. Perfection

needs no enhancement. After

a lengthy lip-smacking ceremony

we realized we had only nine short days

to learn the recipe.

Every morning we returned for our break-fix, got to know our waiter (the owner) and met his wife, adult daughter, teenage sons and little ones. Only his daughter spoke some English, which was a good deal better than our minimal Thai vocabulary, consisting of only a few simple words for hello, thank you, and



the like. Days passed with progress until the day before our departure from the idyllic island. After repeatedly trying to communicate our desire for the recipe, the daughter appeared at our table that morning carrying a small bowl of batter and made a sincere effort to define the ingredients. The batter appeared to be regular pancake batter but as we took down the recipe she emphasized there was no wheat flour in it, only “corn powder.”

Later that day, perched on the tailgate of a little pick up truck which serves as the island bus, hair blowing in the wind, I headed for Naton (the island’s only town) to look for “corn powder.” In downtown Naton, in a shop near the harbor, an obliging grocer tried to understand my request. He pleaded ignorance about corn powder, but thought I must mean corn flour. With his patchy English and my pathetic Thai, we finally agreed that a one-pound box with an ear of corn pictured on it and a cellophane opening revealing a fine white powdery material must be the stuff. A few bot (Thai currency) later I was its proud owner, with high hopes of duplicating the recipe. By this time we were conserving luggage space and a pound seemed a heavy load, but sacrifices must be made for treasures.

Upon arrival back home in Minnesota, among the first of our post-jet lag activities was to open the precious box of mysterious powder. We howled with the realization that we were the lucky owners of a box of Thai corn starch, identical twin of the plain old American variety.

Now, I don’t usually feel dense, but this cornstarch thing thickened my brain. Try as I might, I couldn’t duplicate the Thai pancakes. Wanda tried her hand with similar disappointing results. Finally, however, we hit on a fool-proof recipe for these wonderful treats. Don’t let the expense of the ingredients deter you. They’re worth every bot.

## authentic thai pineapple pancakes

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 airline ticket to Bangkok
- 1 ticket to Koh Samui
- 1 swimsuit
- 1 T shirt
- 1 pair shorts
- 1 change of underwear
- 1 sun hat
- 1 pair sandals
- 1 bottle sun block
- 1 pair sun glasses
- a few bot
- 1 piece luggage
- 1 walk down the beach
- 1 choice of open air restaurant with table facing the ocean

### DIRECTIONS

- Combine first two ingredients.
- Pack next nine ingredients into tenth and add to above.
- Garnish with last two ingredients.
- Relish anytime.
- This recipe may also be used for fresh-grilled catch of the day and all manner of curries, noodle dishes and exotic treats.



# pallor in paradise



Toward sunset we make haste for the Zihuatanejo lighthouse. We've been anticipating with pleasure the vigor of an uphill hike at the end of a dreamy, tropical day in Mexico, followed by a glorious performance by the setting sun on the open Pacific. It's especially rewarding to know that our return will be downhill on wide, sturdy stones, befitting a lighthouse trail.

It is an unusually sticky evening in this arid, hot place. Rains, we learn, will not come for another six months. Yet this evening feels like rain. The woods around our cobbled path are a shade greener than a couple of days ago. But the biggest change is sound. Trees and jungle grasses are alive with countless creatures in full voice. I silently dismiss a little shudder of resistance, based on nebulous jungle terror, and proceed.

We cross a large grassy area between the beach and the jungle pocked with crab holes five inches in diameter. A multitude of blazing red crabs scampers for their holes as we walk. We are momentarily aware of being token humans in this vast communion

of Nature's creatures and perhaps the only ones without an invitation to the party.

There is usually a price to pay for disregarding intuition. It comes in a flash, a yard long, thick as Wanda's arm. SPLAT! It drops out of a tree a few feet ahead of her, slithers wildly, menacing, with forked tongue, makes eye contact. Then, just as quickly, its geometric black and white camouflage disappears in the grass.

Wanda jolts, spins, wide-eyed and speechless, toward me. She has lost her tan. What an irony to have such pallor in paradise. I croak rhetorically, "Snake!" Adrenalin lifts our soles for the sprint back to our "safe beach." We settle, gratefully, for a sunset without orb, for thick, pink clouds and premature darkness. Later, sharing snake frights with our hosts, Wanda says, "That snake looked me right in the eye."

In the next episode: scorpions, bats, tarantulas and the really scary coral snake!





## *cheese snake*

### **INGREDIENTS**

10 oz. tube refrigerated pizza crust (e.g. Pillsbury)  
2 cups (8 oz. pkg.) shredded mozzarella (regular or light)  
4 oz. thinly sliced pastrami, corned beef or other dry spiced meat  
8 small dill pickles

### **DIRECTIONS**

Pre-heat oven to 375°.

Cut pizza dough in half lengthwise, then join pieces end to end and lay in large greased or non-stick cookie pan.

Spread 1 cup cheese evenly on crust, avoiding the edges by 1/2".

Arrange meat to cover cheese.

Spread remaining 1 cup cheese on top of meat.

Dry pickles with paper towel.

Make a row of pickles lengthwise on top of cheese.

Roll dough tightly over pickles.

Pinch long edge of crust to form spine, and pinch ends to seal.

Decorate with pimento olive halves for eyes and forked pimento tongue.

Bake 25 minutes.

Cool 5 minutes before slicing into 1" pieces.

Serve immediately.

Nice brunch dish.





## *shamrock roll*

A variation on stuffed pizza roll

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup potato flakes (any flavor)  
1  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup skim milk  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt  
green food color  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen peas  
10 oz. tube refrigerated pizza crust

### DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 375°.  
In large bowl mix flakes, milk and salt.  
Add a few drops of food color to make a nice, light green.  
Mix in frozen peas.  
On an 11" x 17" non-stick cookie sheet, stretch pizza crust to 10" x 16".  
On long edge of pizza crust, about 2 inches in, shape a log of potato mixture to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of each end.  
Roll dough over potato log, continuing until completely rolled and seam is on bottom.  
Pinch ends to seal.  
Shape as you wish for a serving platter (straight or curved).  
Bake on middle oven shelf for 25 minutes until golden brown.  
Cool a few minutes before slicing with sharp knife.  
Makes 8 to 10 side servings.

Terrific contribution for a St. Pat's party.



**love that solid food**

**2.**

# *hawaii*

an open air shower at the beach  
    one cold-water pipe  
    above a concrete platform  
from which the shore descends,  
    sharply, to the sea

    my face upturned  
welcomes the fresh water  
    rinsing hair smooth  
freeing my skin from  
    tight, drying salt

straight above, a smokey blue-grey sky  
    turns pink then orange  
    at the horizon  
    the ocean waits  
for the sun to settle in for the night

    I slowly pick a path  
    back to the beach  
across this stinging wasteland  
    in bare feet  
    gravel, sharp at every step,  
focusses my gaze downward

    volcanic beach  
    a dark, narrow strip  
    of powdered black sand  
met abruptly by jagged, lava rock  
    its glistening, midnight shade  
    blankets the island  
everywhere, heat radiates upward

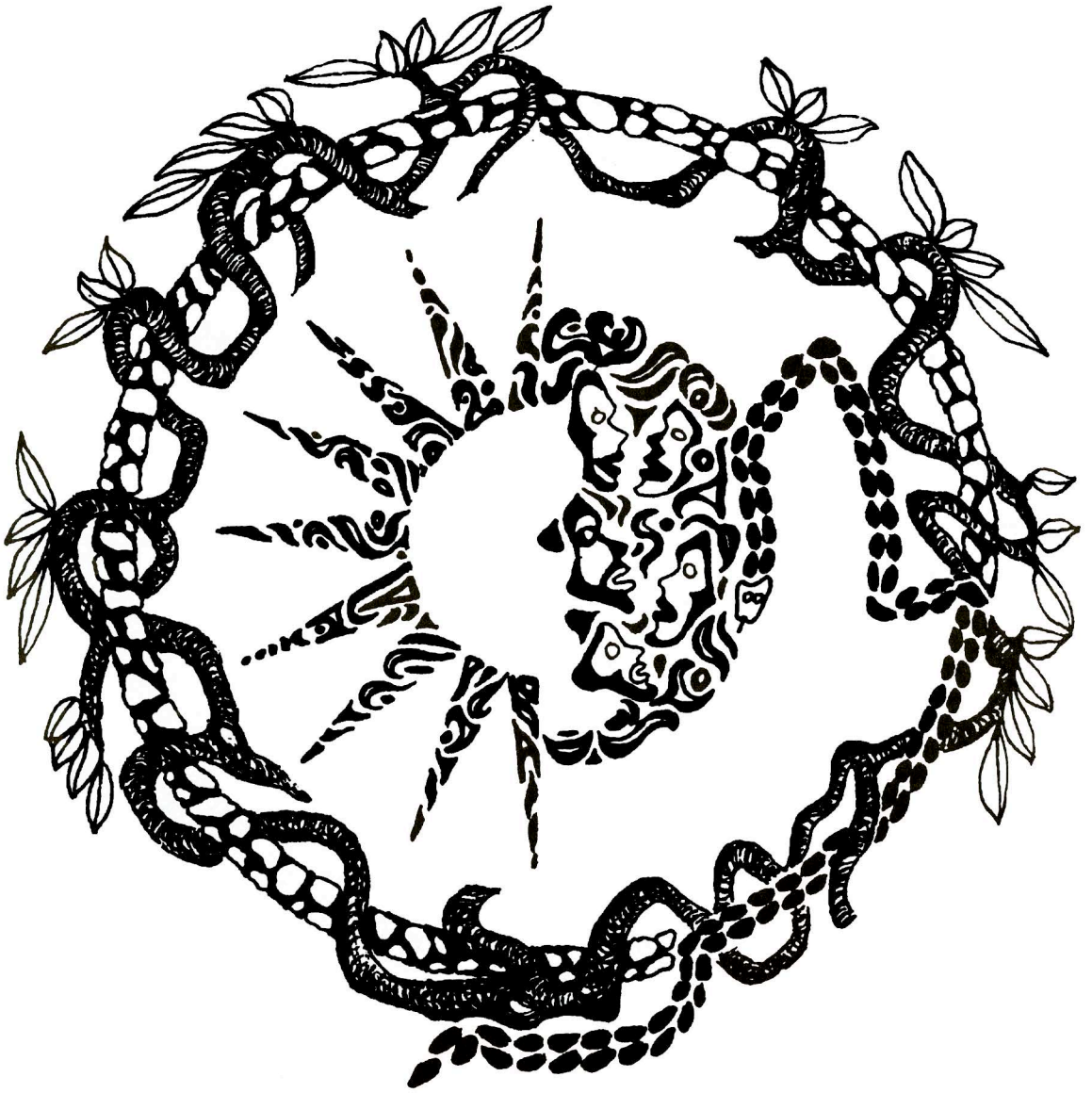
reaching the relief of smooth sand  
looking up at last  
I stop short at the sight  
of a woman walking away  
in front of me  
shining wet black hair  
clings to a bare, pale back  
above her narrow waist

for an instant  
I catch a short breath  
smile at the beauty of this image

then again at the recognition of you  
as the stranger vanishes  
transformed  
becomes my love  
of all these years  
walking ahead from shower to beach

familiarity steals this breathless pleasure  
to admire you with new eyes  
a stranger standing alone  
one moment in the sun

☺



## *i am here*

I am here to listen  
I am here to talk  
I am here to agree  
I am here to challenge  
I am here to look  
I am here to learn  
I am here to love  
I am here to stay



# *pasta salad ala molokai*

One evening on Molokai we decided to have a pot luck cook out with some new acquaintances. Since groceries were fairly expensive on the island, and since it was important to avoid leftover ingredients, as we were leaving in a couple days, this recipe was ideal and delicious. You will need a stove top burner, a pot to boil noodles and a large mixing bowl.

## **INGREDIENTS**

ten to twelve ounce package rotini ( or rotelli, macaroni, or pasta shells)

6 to 8 individual packets of mayonnaise

4 to 6 individual packets of sweet pickle relish

salt and pepper ( our hotel snack counter gladly donated the mayo, relish, salt and pepper )

4 ounce package regular or herb flavored feta cheese, crumbled ( I used tomato basil cheese, the only variety I could find )

fresh green or red pepper, chopped ( a mildly hot pepper is nice )

fresh papaya ( or cantaloupe ), cut into small chunks

## **DIRECTIONS**

Boil noodles according to package instructions.

Drain and rinse briefly with cold water.

Transfer to a mixing bowl.

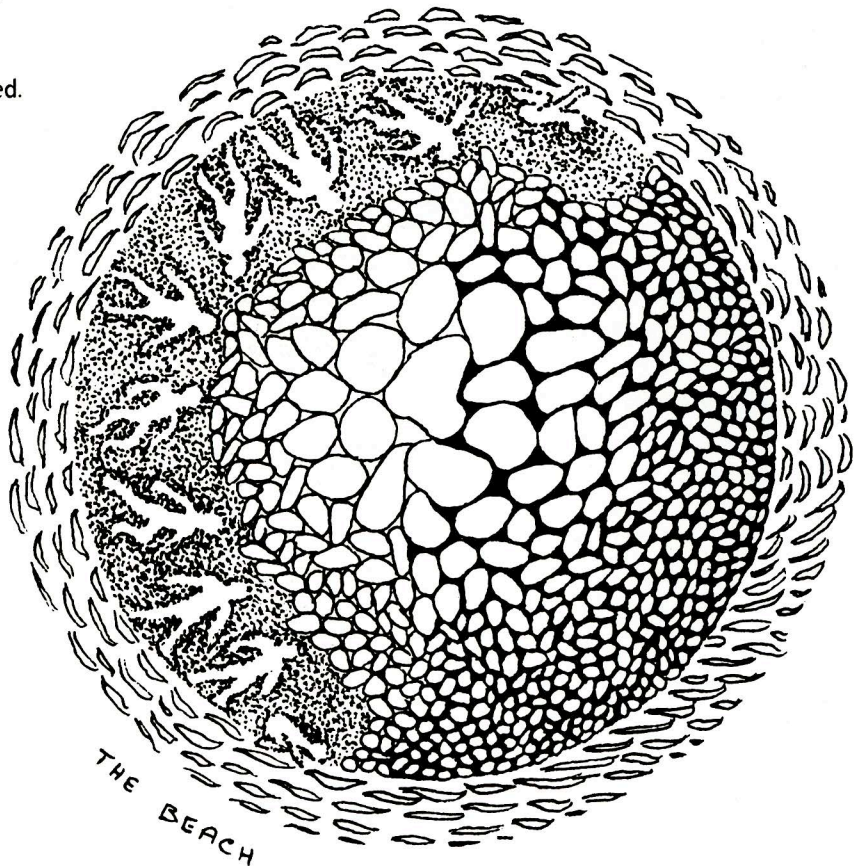
Add mayo and relish, salt and pepper to taste.

Stir until pasta is evenly coated.

Stir in remaining ingredients.

Serve immediately or chill if desired.

Serves 4.





## from the word doh

### Part 1

Sadie Bassman considered herself third in line of the Winnipeg piano teachers of the late 1940's. She did not feel this was equitable, only realistic. What made it so was the caliber of students attending for lessons with the highly respected Peter Clefczyk of the North End and Norma Treble of the South End. It was assumed that Winnipeg would turn out the rare concert pianist under the tutelage of one of them. Sadie took it personally that the prestige of Clefczyk and Treble (as she preferred to clip them) was owing to their prosperity and inevitable appeal to wealthier parents with progressive musical aspirations for their children. To Sadie came the children of first generation Canadian Jewish parents whose own parents had barely departed the boat from Mother Russia.



Suffice it to say, Sadie was a woman of singular ambition, unfettered by a sense of humor. She took up the banner of tooling brilliant pianists out of the little savages with whom she was saddled. Only if she succeeded would she garner her true place in history as mother mentor to a Rubenstein.

I was one of Sadie's early primitives. By the age of six I was attending for weekly lessons. For a year or so, until I was able to learn the bus route, one of my parents or my grandmother took the bus with me to Sadie's studio in her small, North End bungalow. Protocol required that students use the side entrance under the stucco arch. This entry opened to the staircase leading to the basement teaching studio. The front door led directly to the living room where a Steinway grand filled the room, massively. I learned

quickly that only people who played with brilliance were allowed to use the front door.

Right from the beginning, lessons with Sadie were a chore. Yet, I recall my dogged, if ambivalent, commitment to this continuous sacrifice of my childhood freedom. Very early on I fell in love with an eight bar treble melody written by a six year old girl whose idyllic sweetness was pictured in an oval photograph next to her composition. Perhaps this identification fortified me for the years of criticism, repetition and metronomic monotony which followed.

To be honest, it wasn't always dull with Sadie. There was often a recital, festival or exam to prepare for, a new reason for anxiety and extra practice. Sometimes, as a demonstration that I was still in the running for excellence, I got extra lessons to practice with Sadie. As my skill increased over the years, I got to practice upstairs on the Steinway. At these times Sadie became somewhat solicitous, seeming to recognize that a steady dose of criticism would unsettle me for competition.

But most of the time she was exasperated, discouraged, disappointed, or disgusted with me. How was it, she would ask, that after a week of daily practice, I had failed to correct my glaring miscarriage of Beethoven? Why did my tempo speed up like a team of runaway horses? Did I know how to count at all? What could be more important than daily Czerny exercises? Wasn't my father, the music lover, working round the clock so I could have piano lessons? And didn't my mother know I wasn't practicing the lessons Sadie so carefully wrote in pencil in my staff-lined book?

In truth, after the first year or two Mom didn't have a clue about my piano lessons. I have known few people less interested in music than Mom. She was glad to believe herself tone deaf because it meant she was not responsible for what I practiced. She was responsible only for the forbidding task of dusting the blistered paint of the old Bell piano and washing the cracking ivories

daily, producing the characteristic dish rag glissando. Nonetheless, full credit goes to Mom for keeping my fingers on the keyboard through all the years. She treated my practice periods much as she had my earlier toilet training. I had to do it, but what I made was up to me. Her clock-watching eyes and tone deaf ears permitted liberty to improvise. I took full advantage of the daily opportunity—sometimes playing recklessly with Mozart, sometimes impassioned to create musical responses to the confinement which kept me indoors on sunny days when other children were roaring with joy outside.

As doodling (my term for improvising) became integrated into my style it became harder to conceal it from Sadie, who was dismayed at my propensity for mistakes. She reserved her gold stars for students who played the notes exactly as written by the historic masters of composition. It's hard to explain my fascination with invisible notes, the ones Mozart would have written, had he been me. But here it is, in writing at last, the truth of my oppositional nature. I have always preferred to depart the printed page, be it note or word. This gave my years of training with Sadie a risky quality. Because of my attachment to her, improvising in the face of her perfectionism was playing with fire.

Sadie and I spent ten years together, one or two lessons each week, every year a major competition at the Manitoba Music Festival, where stern, British adjudicators judged and a yearly exam sponsored by the University of Toronto School of Music, where stone-faced men from Ontario prevailed. All serious students of music understood that these were the markers and gates of progress. Every year my anxiety, verging on panic, grew with the approach of either the Festival or Exam. The former was more terrifying because it held the potential for vast humiliation before fifty to one hundred peers and their teachers, parents, or close relatives. This meant an audience of at least two hundred people with an intent to place their teachers and families on top of the heap.

Sadie often came with me, unmindful of my chattering teeth or occasional departures to vomit the meal I hadn't eaten. I remember well the taste of clear, sour, mucous and the year I couldn't make it to the bathroom, creating a big wet vomit spot on my gray gabardine skirt. There was always the company of other kids in these degradations of the elevated occasion of music competition. I still see in my mind's eye a fat girl ascending to the piano on stage with her skirt soundly stuck in her bum (as we, the uncouth, used to say).

Sadie was unconcerned about such things. What mattered was that her students triumph over Treble's and Clefczyk's and especially, that her Jewish students take the honors away from the students of the indentured English stock. It was likely this theme, more than any other, that turned my young viscera and put such a performance weight on my young, Jewish shoulders. I was the dark horse, the long shot, mounting those stairs in that hallowed English hall to set the keys of a Steinway on fire, on Jewish fire, to be brilliant for the sake of Moses, Abraham and Sadie.

Year after year, I succeeded in completing my pieces without faltering or forgetting the memorized music. But, year after year, I sped up to such a frenzy that the chair could hardly contain me. Sadie was dismayed, but impressed with my agility. So were the adjudicators, though they awarded top marks to the more refined and moderated performers, some of whom were Jewish children. I emerged from these times shamed by my failure on behalf of Sadie and the Jews, but secretly astonished at the dizzying power of anxiety to free my fingers for wild runs. Arpeggios lent themselves especially well to this and rooted themselves deeply in my style.

In June, from the University of Toronto School of Music, came the real test of perseverance and diligence. This arrived just in time to vie for attention with final exams at school. Every teacher wanted a pound of flesh, insisting that

her subject was the one that paved the way to a better life. Sadie bent over backwards to offer almost unlimited opportunities for extra lessons and practice periods. It's a wonder and tribute to the stamina of childhood that I was able to distribute my energy among so many areas of study, with a fairly even hand.

The pressure to reform and conform to the written note was intense. I wanted to please. Sadie was sacrificing her life for my success. Sometimes it was clear she finished meals post haste to be with me. Often she wore an apron and smelled of salmon. Mundane realities notwithstanding, she labored against the clock to help me memorize the necessary quota of masterpieces and imbue them with passion born out of complete confidence. Alas, though I achieved the passion of intense concentration and captured every note by rote, I continued to be feeble in the confidence department. Every year for ten years, I sat with swollen throat in the majestic lemon-polished hall at Westminster Church, waiting, frozen, for the adjudicator to call my number. Then, limp and semi-hypnotized, I regurgitated the drilled passion.

Good marks blessed me until the grade ten exam. Only grades ten and eleven remained to complete a teaching certificate or diploma of proficiency as a concert performer. But I failed by two points. It was a monumental disappointment costing gallons of tears. There was no one to blame but myself. I had chosen to write for special scholarships prior to high school graduation, and to be valedictorian. I'd devoted countless hours to making Kleenex carnations for prom vehicles, and to worrying about an acne-free date, a strapless gown and an elegant hairdo. I declined extra practice periods. Sadie gave up on me.

Discussion with Sadie was brief. I had finally received the dreaded black mark and fallen from any semblance of grace. Sadie turned to more promising protoplasm coming up in the ranks. One of these might be Rubenstein. Not me. So ended my formal piano lessons. In retrospect, I think I was doomed from the word Doh.

Part 2

Five years after my abysmal Toronto Conservatory failure, during my medical internship at Hennepin County General Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I often played the old piano in the doctors' lounge for relaxation. I had barely touched a piano in the interim. A strong rekindling of love for the piano and singing transported me back home to Winnipeg and memories of Sadie. For a while I stuck to the stack of classical music I had played for years and kept in the lounge piano bench. One day the music disappeared. Everyone claimed ignorance. Once again, my tears flowed.

Then an invisible moment of decision arrived. My musical core was liberated from the printed page and I began to compose songs with full piano accompaniment. At first they were few and far between. But at some point I became serious about gathering a song journal of life's meaningful threads. By 1987, I had written more than 175 songs and piano compositions and produced two recordings.

It occurred to me Sadie might take heart from knowing that a student of hers had not only continued to play the piano, but was also a dedicated composer. In my home town it was customary for people to drop in on each other for brief visits, so on a trip to Winnipeg I decided to drop in on Sadie with the gift of an album. Early one sunny spring afternoon I approached her front door with vague trepidation. The inside door was ajar so I knew someone was home. After a hard swallow I rang the doorbell. A short delay was followed by the emergence of a slightly stooped strawberry blonde woman out of the dark interior. She opened the outer door a crack. (Even though her husband died years earlier, Sadie still dyed her hair as she had for him, since she met him in that shade.)

"Sadie," I said deliberately, "I'm Phyllis Goldin, your former student. Do you remember me?" Momentarily she looked puzzled, then said with escalating excitement, "Phyllis Goldin, Phyllis

Goldin, PHYLLIS GOLDIN?" Then suddenly, "I have to go, there's a pot on the stove, I have to leave the house in a minute, I'll call you at your Mother's".

Sadie did call. She was now in her seventies and remembered me and my family well. She taught piano to my brother and sister after me, and she and her husband were acquaintances of my parents. Despite all this, she was unable to overcome whatever fears had obviously taken up residence in her. Now in her seventies, she seemed frightened. She declined my offer to visit, repeating like a broken record her urgency to remove pots from the stove or leave the house in a minute. On two subsequent visits the same pattern repeated. Finally, in 1990, Sadie understood at last that I wouldn't visit, but wanted her to have an album. She agreed to have me leave it between the doors.

Three years later, on a rare trip back to Winnipeg, I called Sadie by phone. I assured her I wouldn't be visiting, but wanted to know how she was. "Still playing in the Winnipeg Pops Orchestra," she said, with characteristic smoker's croak. "Listen," she added, "I can't talk. There's a pot on the stove."

"Just one quick question, Sadie. How did you like the album I left for you?"

"It's a real treasure," she replied.





## *rhapsody in brew*



### INGREDIENTS

4 medium sized beets, peeled and sliced  
1 1/2 cup water  
(or a can of beets, including juice + 1/2 cup water)  
1 clove garlic  
15 oz. can tomato sauce (or two 8 oz. cans)  
1 cup non-fat plain yogurt  
1/8 tsp. hot pepper sauce (Tabasco)  
12 oz. beer (regular or light)  
sour cream for garnish (regular, light or non-fat)  
parsley for garnish

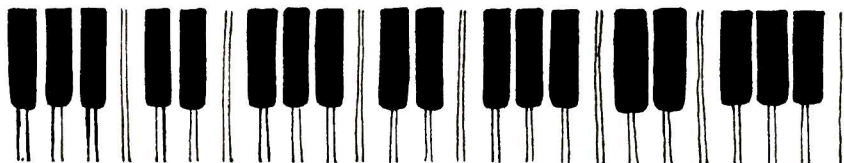
### DIRECTIONS

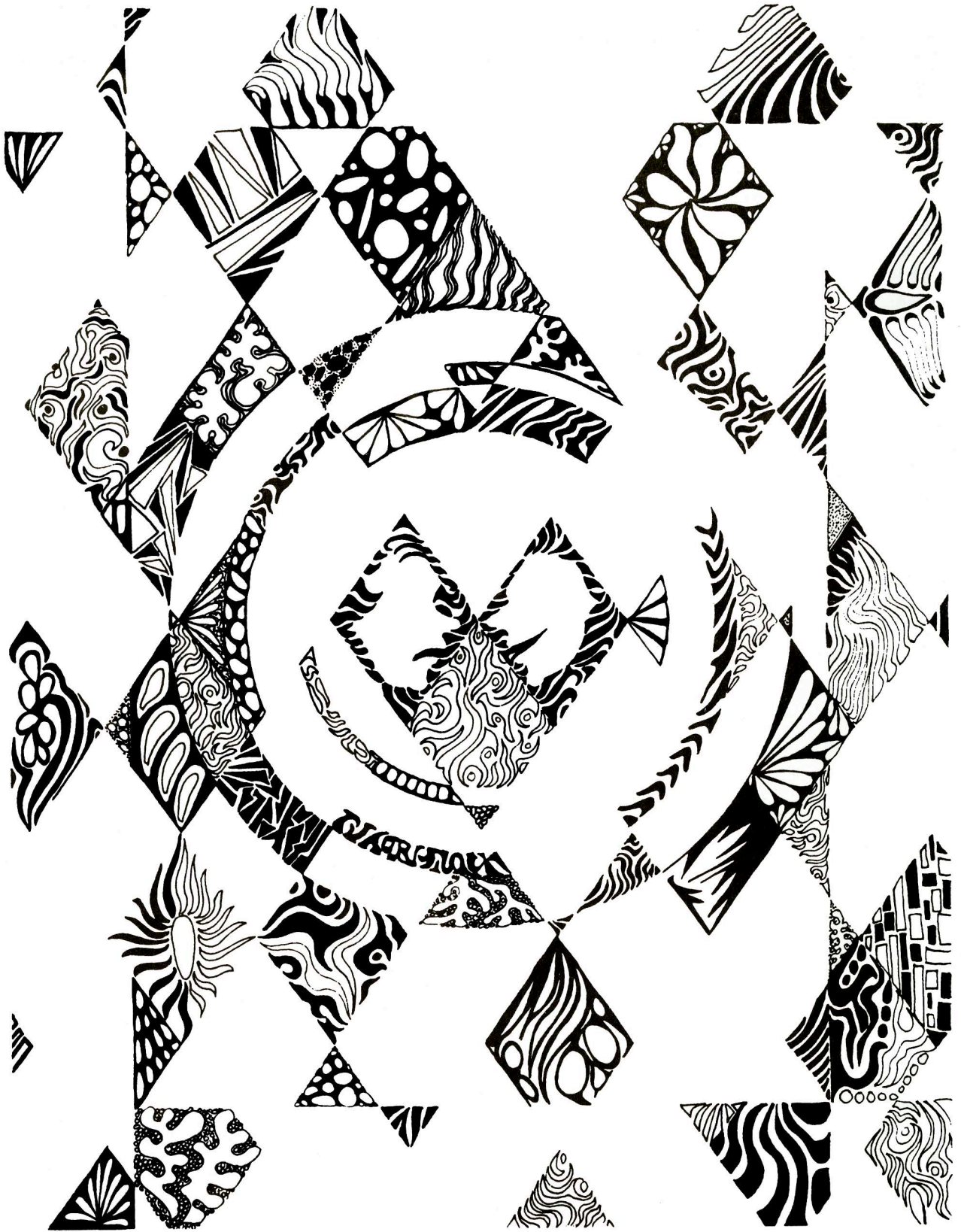
In large sauce pan steam beets in water indicated.  
Remove beets, retaining liquid in sauce pan.  
Puree beets and garlic in food processor or blender.  
Blend in tomato sauce, yogurt and hot pepper sauce.  
Return to sauce pan.  
Simmer 1/2 hour, stirring occasionally.  
Add beer, stir and simmer another 15 minutes.  
Serve hot or cold with dollop of sour cream and parsley garnish.

Serves 8 to 12.

Beautiful at the holidays, served in white bowls.

Gag Gift Idea: Fill a sealable plastic freezer bag with cold Rhapsody in Brew. Affix a small length of plastic tubing to the bag. Label with recipient's name and whatever other transfusion information you wish. This is good for a mildly ailing friend, or someone turning an advanced age.







## john of middle america

desperate with familiar fatigue  
he lacks the spark to be tragic  
on this choice autumn day  
while light and shadow flirt

he pounds nails into a roof  
with withering spirit  
that requires the virtuous tyranny of work  
and shaves energy  
to the thin edge of endurance

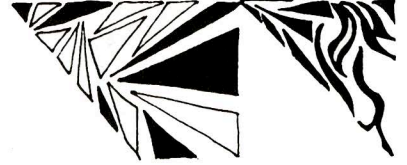
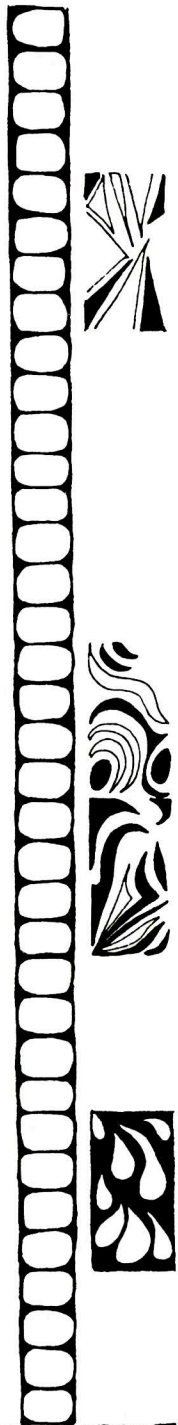
John of Middle America  
awakens daily in Vietnam  
feels he is surplus protoplasm  
useful, nearly pleasureless  
lost in a jungle of discontent

I know other Johns  
dear Johns who wept seas  
three decades ago  
when war wore off their shine  
on the other side of midnight



## five country women

- “Where once four families farmed this land,  
now it is worked by one.  
Three houses stand filled with hay.”
- “This year we raise 45,000 turkeys  
we don’t own,  
work for the poultry company  
on our own place.  
It is too big.”
- “This corn would dry by itself.  
Instead, we burn fuel to dry it quickly.  
Last year we sold too much in December.  
Took out a loan to pay taxes.”
- “The children do not stay to farm like we did.  
They go away to school  
live in the city.  
My sister’s children are embarrassed  
by the smell of their grandparents’ barn.”
- “I used to know all these families.  
Everyone went to Mountain Grove.  
The new ones go to church in town  
or not at all.  
We never meet.”  
☹







## turkey potato loaf

### INGREDIENTS

4 small potatoes (Hard boiled eggs, dill pickles, or your ideas may be used instead of potatoes.)

1 pound ground turkey (the leaner the better)

1 cup uncooked oatmeal

1/2 cup light or non-fat sour cream or yogurt

1/2 cup light or non-fat cottage cheese

1/2 cup onions, chopped

1/2 cup shredded carrots

1 egg

1/2 tsp. each of:

tarragon

rosemary

sage

thyme

garlic powder

salt

pepper

paprika

### DIRECTIONS

Boil potatoes with skins on for 10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350°

Combine all other ingredients (except paprika) in a large bowl and mix thoroughly.

Pack 1/2 of the mixture evenly in a loaf pan (9" x 5" x 2 1/2").

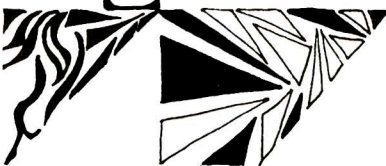
Place the potatoes lengthwise down the middle.

Cover with remaining mixture, making sure the potatoes are covered and mixture is packed to fill spaces.

Sprinkle liberally with paprika.

Bake at 350° for 1 to 1 1/4 hours.

Serves 6 to 8.



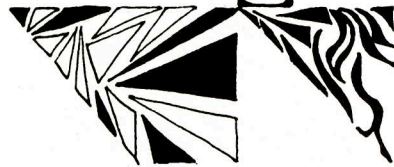
# apric' oat muffins

## INGREDIENTS

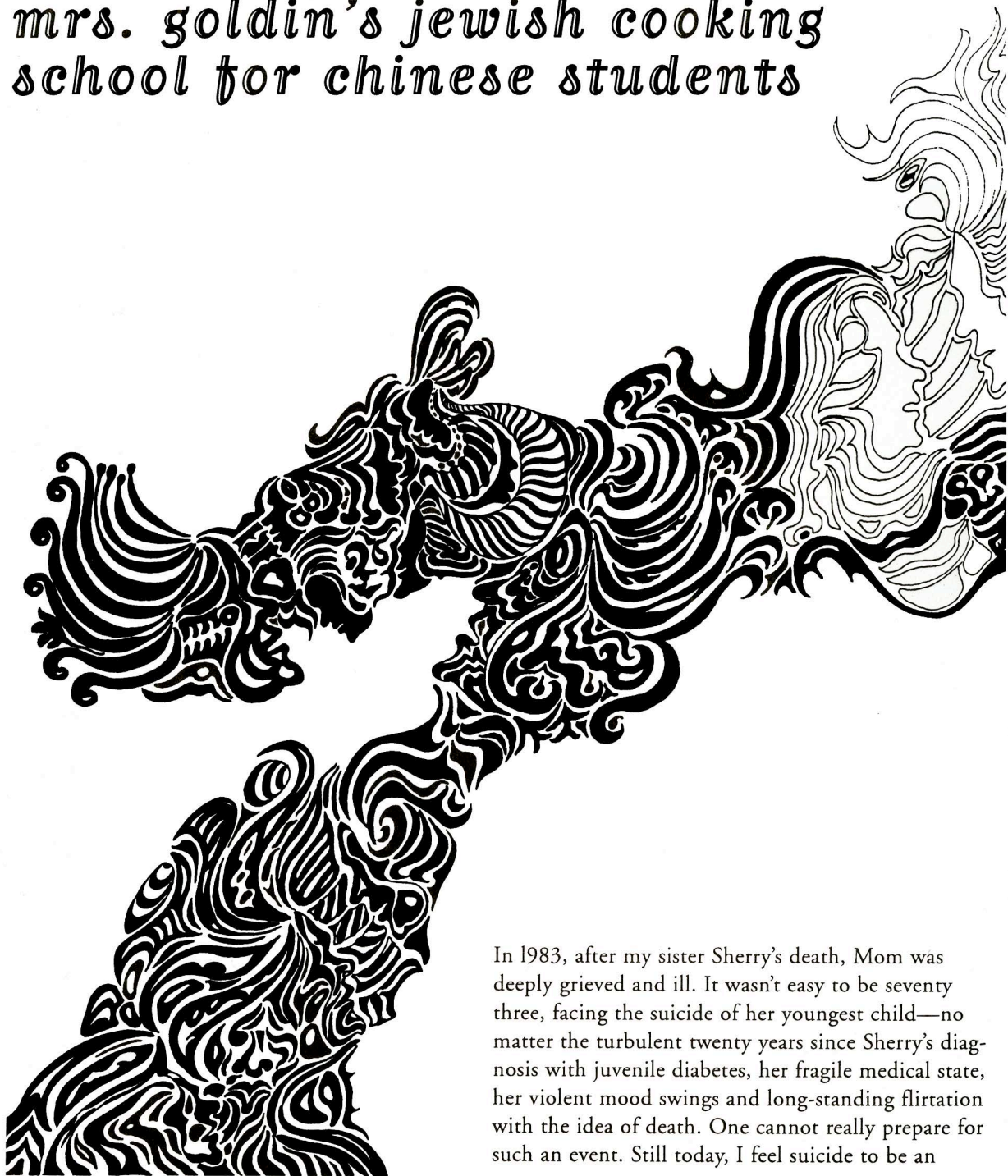
- 1 cup flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/3 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup orange or pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

## DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 375°.
- Place a dozen paper cups in muffin tin.
- Sift first five ingredients together.
- Add quick oats and stir well.
- Stir in chopped apricots.
- Add all other ingredients and stir briefly until dry ingredients just moistened.
- Spoon into muffin tin, filling each cup about 3/4 full.
- Bake 20 minutes at 375°.



# *mrs. goldin's jewish cooking school for chinese students*



In 1983, after my sister Sherry's death, Mom was deeply grieved and ill. It wasn't easy to be seventy three, facing the suicide of her youngest child—no matter the turbulent twenty years since Sherry's diagnosis with juvenile diabetes, her fragile medical state, her violent mood swings and long-standing flirtation with the idea of death. One cannot really prepare for such an event. Still today, I feel suicide to be an



unspeakable assault on the value of life. Sherry's suicide took much of the shine off Mom's existence, and mine as well. But even as I was exhausted, grieved and enraged, Mom's terrible, vulnerable openness was not lost on me.

For years I had worried about Mom's ability to care for herself. Every visit revealed a new crop of cigarette or stove top burns in her housecoats. As she became visibly more stooped she couldn't get around without a walker. For a person in her condition to live alone seemed to invite disaster. Yet, her mind was sound. I thought she deserved the freedom to live as she chose and knew well her fear of nursing homes. My rationalization, however, afforded no philosophical release from the anxiety about being 500 miles away. While Sherry was alive and trying to meet Mom's chore list, I worried more about Sherry's burden than Mom's disabilities. With Sherry's death Mom's desperation peaked. In prior times I talked myself blue in the face trying to persuade her to allow me to recruit a live-in helper. Now, in crisis, she agreed.

Borrowing energy from my future, I moved at break-neck speed to make funeral arrangements and Mom's living arrangements. Before Sherry's funeral I placed an ad in the newspaper requesting services of light housekeeping and cooking in exchange for room and board. Unlike mine, a dozen other ads called for a "mature woman." The morning the ad appeared the phone rang. A young voice attempting

to make himself understood was clearly Asian. In halting English he indicated he was answering my ad. With painstaking patience, spelling out words, he and I agreed he would come to the house at ten o'clock the next morning. At ten minutes to ten the doorbell rang. There stood a young Chinese man, well-dressed and smiling.

Wayne Lee was part of a steady migration of students from Hong Kong landing on Canada's shores to settle in major cities. Sent as emissaries of families terrified at the prospect of Chinese domination in 1997, when Hong Kong would become part of mainland China, these young people arrived with high hopes of opportunity. Indeed, the Canadian government generously financed a university entrance program for Asian youth. Living costs, however, often taxed students' families, especially if more than one child emigrated.

Wayne's presence brought fresh energy into Mom's grieving home. In person, with body language to fill in the blanks, his English was pretty understandable. Some time later, when he told us how the immigration folks assigned him a name for his life in Canada, we laughed with the realization that his name was Wayne, not Wing, as we originally thought.

He moved a few possessions into the basement suite of Mom's home the next day. Many times he proclaimed with disbelief that he was in a mansion larger than his family home in Hong Kong where his parents and seven siblings lived. His excitement was palpable. Not having to pay room and board would help his parents send over their other children. The entire family hoped to settle in Canada by 1997.

We agreed that, since Wayne cooked Szechuan cuisine for his family, he would do some of the cooking. Eating Sunday dinner at the Shanghai or Nan King restaurants was a long tradition in our family. Other than Jewish cooking, Mom appreciated Chinese most. Wayne also agreed to do some shopping, housecleaning and pick up and return library books at the turn of the century library a few blocks away. Mom had read almost everything on the shelves and was first on the list for new arrivals.

Grudgingly cheered by Wayne's presence, Mom began recovering energy and, simultaneously, finding fault. She asked me, "Shouldn't he know it's embarrassing that he uses my bathroom?" "Does he have to be around watching TV so much?" "Why is he out with Chinese friends when he needs to be studying and speaking English?" "Why is his rice cooker taking up kitchen counter space and isn't he bored with rice, already?" I suggested she level with him about her privacy needs and other expectations. As for his choice of social milieu, it was none of her business, nor was she responsible for his academic success. The latter was a special thorn in her side since, as a former school teacher, she was a self-proclaimed guardian of the English language.

Within a few months they ironed out most of the creases in their relationship. Mom retained control of the kitchen while allowing for the rice cooker. She successfully taught Wayne to make latkes (potatoes to pancakes) and a number of other Jewish dishes. In the area of food preparation they challenged each other beautifully.

On one of my visits to Winnipeg about a year later, we three dined on fluffy, delicious latkes, prepared by Wayne, and Mom's homemade chicken soup. She was obviously proud of her student. With tongue in cheek I asked Wayne whether he would prefer rice or potatoes if stranded on a desert island. To my surprise, he replied quite seriously, "Potatoes," explaining that they offer much more variety than rice.

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## *baba's feast*

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### *liquid goldin chicken soup*

Put this on before bed—ready in the morning.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

6 to 8 chicken necks (or 2 legs and 2 thighs)  
1 small onion, coarsely chopped  
1 stalk celery, including some leaves, coarsely chopped  
a couple sprigs of fresh dill or 1 tsp. dill weed  
salt and pepper to taste

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Cover chicken with cold water to fill a 5 quart pot up to an inch from top.  
Bring to boil on large element of stove top, skimming

the froth as it forms.

Reduce heat to low, add chopped onion, celery and dill.

Add a little salt and pepper.

Cover and allow to simmer overnight.

In the morning, turn off heat and remove necks.

Refrigerate until well chilled.

Remove congealed fat from surface.

To serve, heat well, but do not boil (a boiled soup will turn cloudy). Salt and pepper to taste.



Until his departure six months later, for an extended visit with his family in Hong Kong, Wayne continued to master English slowly and Jewish cooking rapidly. Before he left he asked Mom if she would like his niece, Eva, to take his place. After a temporary huff and snort Mom agreed. For four years, each student made arrangements for another to take over as he or she had to move on.

There were six students in all. All of them improved their English language skills and learned to make latkes. They gave Mom a new lease on life until her journey ended. Whenever I return to Winnipeg and pass by her former home on Atlantic Avenue, it pleases me to think, "This was once *Mrs. Goldin's Jewish Cooking School for Chinese Students.*"



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## latkes

### INGREDIENTS

4 medium potatoes, with skins on  
1 medium onion  
2 eggs  
4 heaping Tbsp. whole wheat or white flour  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. pepper  
sour cream, regular, light or non-fat (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

Cut washed potatoes and onion in quarters and place in food processor.  
Process on high until finely chopped.  
Add remaining ingredients and continue processing until puréed.  
Pre-heat a large frying pan on medium high, then oil lightly.

When pan is hot, spoon batter from extra large spoon (spare  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) to form pancakes. Turn when they develop small indentations. Fry to a nice brown on both sides. (No need to oil pan more than once.)  
Remove to a covered serving dish. May be kept warm in oven at 150°.  
Serve with side dish of sour cream for topping.  
Enough for eight people.

These re-heat well in regular or micro wave oven. Try your own variations. For example, stir cooked corn, tender peas, or herbs into the batter after processing. Or, place extra ingredients onto latkes right after spooning them into the pan (this way you can make different kinds at the same time).



## *fruit stuffed chicken breasts*

This recipe and the next came to me as I was opening cupboard doors, searching for new combinations of ingredients from among what was on hand.

### INGREDIENTS

skinless, boneless chicken breasts ( 1 for each person )  
lemon pepper

Fruit Stuffing—for each breast, make a mixture of the following:

1 large, pitted prune, chopped  
1 dried apricot, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. grated fresh ginger  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  large pecan, chopped  
1 tsp. currants or raisins ( option, soaked in amaretto\* )  
honey mustard ( see recipe on page 43 )

### DIRECTIONS

Pre-heat oven to 450°.

With a sharp knife, carefully slit each chicken breast lengthwise, to make an ample pocket for the stuffing.

Rub the inside of each pocket with lemon pepper.

Fill each chicken breast with fruit filling and roll edges underneath to completely enclose the filling.

Place chicken breasts on a large, lightly greased or non-stick cookie sheet.

Spread 1 to 2 Tbsp. of honey mustard on the top of each breast.

Bake for 16 minutes.

Serve immediately.

\*Amaretto soaked currants ( or raisins )

Keep a jar of these around for different purposes—for example, topping for ice cream or bread pudding. Simply add enough amaretto to moisten currants and turn the jar over now and then to keep them moist.



# **potato bake**

## **INGREDIENTS**

4 medium potatoes  
2 large carrots or 1 large sweet potato  
1 medium onion  
4 cloves garlic  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  cup lime or lemon juice  
5 Tbsp. Western, French, or Catalina salad dressing  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  cup water  
1 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. paprika

## **DIRECTIONS**

Pre-heat oven to 350°.

Clean and cut potatoes (leaving skins on), into approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch slices.

Clean and slice carrots  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, or sweet potatoes  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick.

Cut onion into small wedges.

Chop garlic.

In a large bowl, stir together lime or lemon juice, salad dressing, water, pepper and paprika.

Add vegetables and mix until covered.

Transfer to a large, covered casserole.

Bake for 60 minutes or until vegetables are soft.

Serves 8.



# stardust showers

We end up paying 59 cents for our showers—all four of us—the price of one green pepper. In the summer of 1991, Carmen and Chuck come from Portland, Oregon, to Prescott, Wisconsin, to visit us over the Fourth of July. We love Carmen and Chuck. They laugh easily. We have been friends for many years and have built a history of great times together.

It is a beautiful summer—warm, sunny days, cool evenings. There is even a roaring thunderstorm one night, reminding Chuck of his boyhood in Michigan. “There are no real thunderstorms in Portland,” he says, “just slow, quiet rain. Nothing to scare you, or make the hair stand up on your neck.”

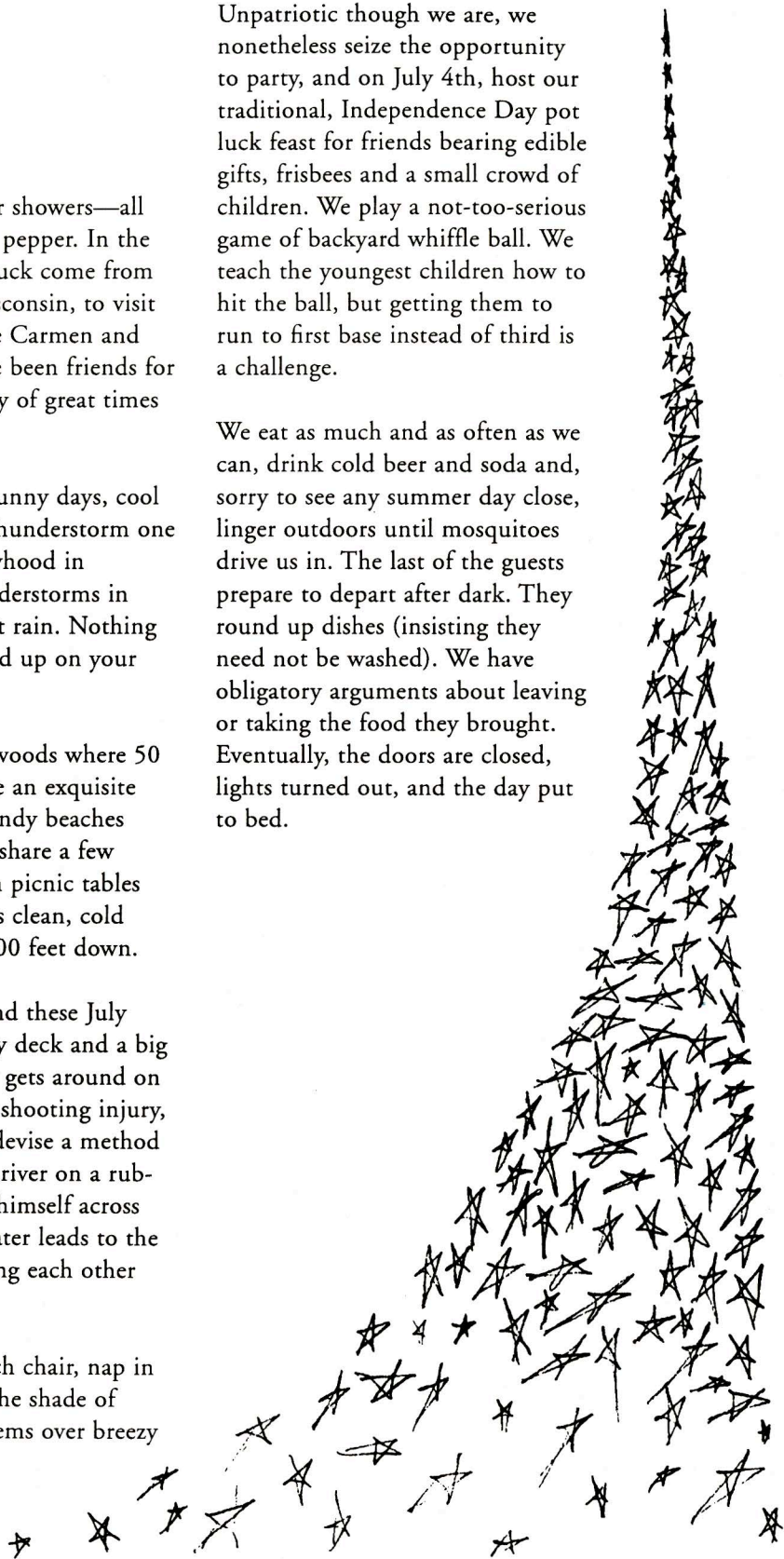
We live in a neighborhood in the woods where 50 families of various definitions share an exquisite stretch of rocky bluff and small, sandy beaches along the St. Croix River. We also share a few quiet, dead-end roads, half a dozen picnic tables and one good well. Its pump draws clean, cold water from its dark resting place 400 feet down.

Carmen, Chuck, Phyllis and I spend these July days between benches on our shady deck and a big blanket on the beach. Chuck, who gets around on crutches, the result of a childhood shooting injury, is a strong swimmer. Together we devise a method of getting him into and out of the river on a rubber raft so he doesn't have to drag himself across the sand. Having the raft in the water leads to the predictable climbing on and pushing each other off. We play like children.

We read, swinging in a canvas porch chair, nap in the hammock, eat strawberries in the shade of Cedars and solve the world's problems over breezy breakfasts lasting past lunch time.

Unpatriotic though we are, we nonetheless seize the opportunity to party, and on July 4th, host our traditional, Independence Day pot luck feast for friends bearing edible gifts, frisbees and a small crowd of children. We play a not-too-serious game of backyard whiffle ball. We teach the youngest children how to hit the ball, but getting them to run to first base instead of third is a challenge.

We eat as much and as often as we can, drink cold beer and soda and, sorry to see any summer day close, linger outdoors until mosquitoes drive us in. The last of the guests prepare to depart after dark. They round up dishes (insisting they need not be washed). We have obligatory arguments about leaving or taking the food they brought. Eventually, the doors are closed, lights turned out, and the day put to bed.



Saturday, July 5th, dawns on more blue sky. We rise early to experience every moment of daylight, even in our lazy ways. Through the morning, brewing coffee, making breakfast, we notice a gradual drop in water pressure, especially at the kitchen faucet. At first it is barely noticeable, as though someone were running a bath. As afternoon approaches, however, it becomes apparent we are losing water altogether.

Conversations with neighbors confirm they are also without water. "Well," I rationalize, "at least it is not a problem within our house. We don't have to be responsible for this one." The developer of the community, who owns Water Works, is required to provide water to the neighborhood. We pay dearly for it.

The head of our Homeowners' Association is on top of the situation, talking with Mr. Water, who has guys working on the pump, which needs a part. Drawing enough water 400 feet up a pipe to serve 50 homes is hard on a pump. Getting parts to repair it is even harder, especially when the day after the 4th of July is a Saturday. The irony of this dramatic demonstration of how completely dependent we are, happening at Independence Day, is not lost on us.

We are expecting friends for dinner that evening. There will be nine of us. Just to be on the safe side, Phyllis calls one of these friends, asking, "Would you be kind enough to bring a couple gallons of water?" When Ken arrives, bearing five plastic jugs of store-bought spring water, I think, "This is overkill. Surely water will be restored before we use five gallons!"

Since we live a good 45 minute drive from the city, several friends need to use the bathroom as soon as they walk in the door. We say, "The water is temporarily out, so please don't flush if you don't absolutely have to." Everyone understands what this means. Fortunately, we have some water in large mixing bowls for washing hands. And by the end of the evening I am grateful to be eating outside.

It is Joyce's birthday, so after dinner there are gifts, including a sing-along tape and song book of love songs we remember from high school years. Singing

takes us into dusk and the waning light is an invitation to light up the last of our sparklers. We toast each other and the summer night.

Later, brushing my teeth with rationed water, it occurs to me that if this goes on much longer, we are in real trouble. We have been without water now for only twelve hours.

In the morning, before our guests arise, Phyllis and I drive our four-wheel-drive and several empty buckets down the steep gravel road to the beach. We fill each one half-full (to prevent spillage), set them carefully in the back and inch our way home. Though some water splashes out, soaking the car carpeting, we are grateful for the opportunity to at least flush toilets. Phone calls to neighbors reveal the problem is being worked on, but no one promises anything.

Having been invited to a picnic, the four of us pile into the car for an afternoon at Afton State Park, on the Minnesota side of the river. Before heading for home that evening after the picnic, we call a neighbor to learn there is still not a drop of running water to be had in the whole community. She tells us, however, that friends of hers in town have generously offered the use of their bathroom, if we want to stop by for showers on our way home.

By now it is after 9:00. The combination of several big days, dirty bodies and no restoration of water in sight is wearing on us. As we drive toward town from the park, the thought of descending on strangers and taking turns using up their hot water as they try to get two kids to bed becomes more than we can stand. We are getting desperate, but we know we need an alternative.

In a flash of divine inspiration, Phyllis remembers the Stardust. The Stardust is a little one story motel just up the road from our place. It is a musty relic of slow highways, when another thirty miles to a real hotel with fresh air in St. Paul was just too far to drive late at night. The Stardust even had an indoor swimming pool. We swam there once, just before they closed it down, so we know there were showers in the pool building. Maybe they still work and we

can get a special emergency dispensation. In our frazzled state, it is worth a try.

I pull the car up to the door in front of the neon "Office" sign. We all wish Phyllis luck as she gets out, prepared to beg, not for a room for the night (there are obviously plenty of these), but a shower for an hour. After what seems like a very long five minutes in the office, she steps outside, into the aura of the dim overhead light, holding a pencil and piece of paper to write down our license number. We take this as a good omen. Another five minutes pass before she comes out, bearing a room key.

She gets into the car. "The showers in the old pool building are turned off," she exclaims nervously. "The man running the place is very suspicious, asked me a lot of questions, wanted my name, address and license number. He can't seem to grasp why we need a room just for showers, even though I explained the whole story to him twice. He thinks we're up to something. Anyway, he says we can use room number 124 for forty five minutes, on the condition we not tell anyone. He seems afraid that if word gets around he'll be inundated with people wanting a room just long enough to shower. This room is not cleaned up yet, so we can take our showers there without charge."

At this wonderful news we begin to get giddy. I make a U-turn and park in front of 124. Taking our beach towels with us, and shampoo from a gym bag we have in the car, we open the door and step into a room with dark paneling, threadbare grey carpet that used to be orange, dirty ashtrays, an unmade double bed and hot, running water. It looks great to us. Since they are our guests, it seems only right that Chuck and Carmen have first dibs on the bathroom. (Carmen says later it is a revelation to see how fast Chuck can take a shower when he is under pressure.)

Phyllis is still in the bathroom as the three of us sit on the edge of the bed pulling on our socks and shoes. I turn the TV on low to catch the 10:00 news. We feel we are really getting away with something (watching TV was not part of the deal Phyllis negotiated), when there is a knock at the door. I

## stardust pepper roll-up

### INGREDIENTS (for 1 roll-up)

- one 7-inch soft, wheat tortilla
- 2 tsp. nacho cheese sauce, honey mustard or non-fat tartar sauce
- green pepper, cut into 4 or 5 thin, long slices
- 1 stick imitation seafood, or slice of lean turkey

### DIRECTIONS

Spread cheese, mustard or tartar sauce evenly over tortilla.

Line up pepper slices around one edge.

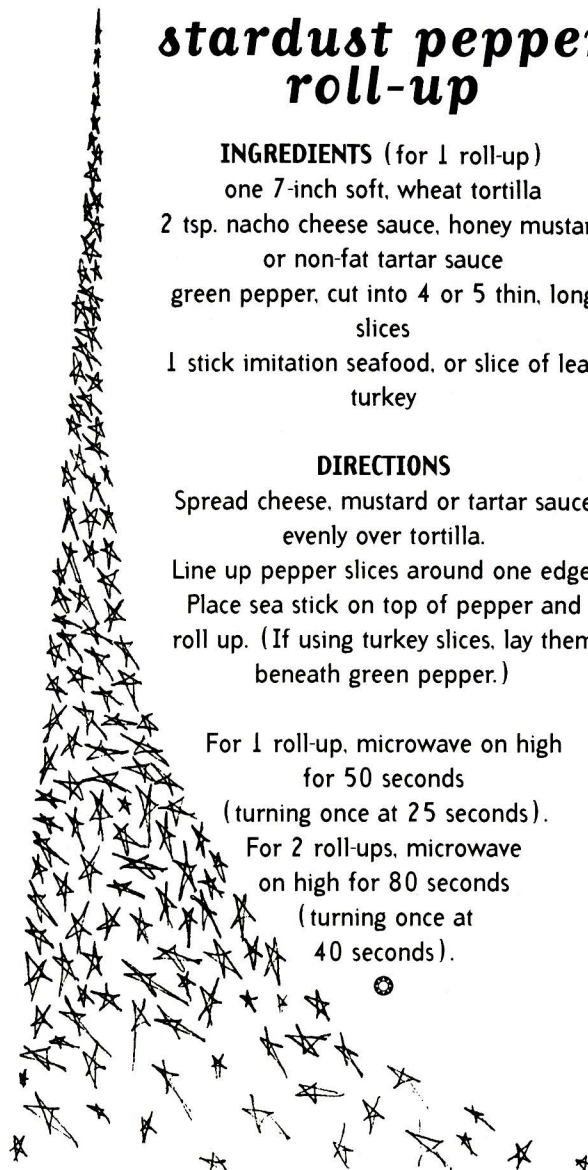
Place sea stick on top of pepper and roll up. (If using turkey slices, lay them beneath green pepper.)

For 1 roll-up, microwave on high for 50 seconds

(turning once at 25 seconds).

For 2 roll-ups, microwave on high for 80 seconds

(turning once at 40 seconds).



dive for the off switch, then we freeze.

"Chuck!" Carmen and I say in unison, "You answer it!," imagining an ax murderer. Chuck grabs his crutches and makes for the door. Outside stands a middle-aged man bearing a striking resemblance to Norman Bates.

"Yes?" says Chuck.

"Is Phyllis here?" asks Norman, peering around the door. Carmen and I sit on the bed, looking innocent.

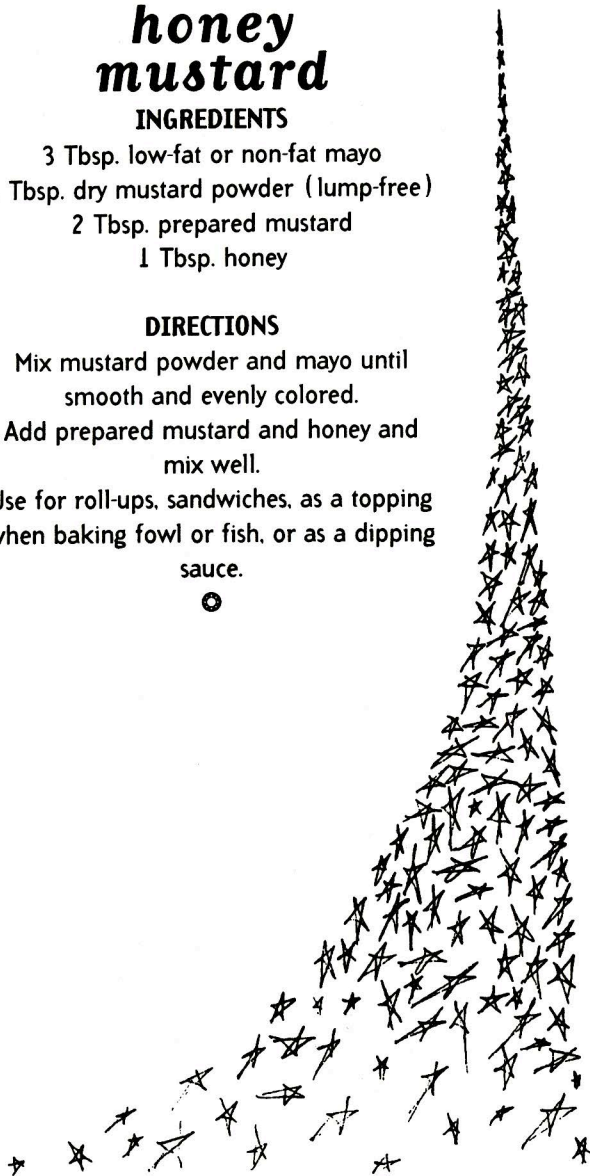
# honey mustard

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 Tbsp. low-fat or non-fat mayo
- 1 Tbsp. dry mustard powder (lump-free)
- 2 Tbsp. prepared mustard
- 1 Tbsp. honey

## DIRECTIONS

- Mix mustard powder and mayo until smooth and evenly colored.
- Add prepared mustard and honey and mix well.
- Use for roll-ups, sandwiches, as a topping when baking fowl or fish, or as a dipping sauce.



“She’s in the shower,” I say, thinking, maybe I shouldn’t tell him where she is, but, where else would she be? We came here for showers, after all.

Chuck asks, “What would you like?”

“Well,” answers Norman, “Phyllis asked if I needed anything and I realize that I do need something. I am cooking stew in the crock pot and I can’t leave the office because I’m the only one here tonight, but I need a green pepper. I know they sell green peppers at the Tom Thumb convenience store up the

road and I thought maybe one of you could run up there and get me one.”

Before he finishes this explanation, Carmen and I are bolting out the door, car keys in hand. “No problem,” she shouts, “we’re on our way.” We leave Chuck and Norman in the dust.

By the time we run in to Tom Thumb, we are laughing so we can hardly find the tiny produce department. We pay 59 cents for their only green pepper and dash back to the motel office.

When Carmen returns to the car after dropping off the pepper, she tells me, “He said, ‘Thank you. Thank you. God bless you.’”

“Hey, that’s great,” I say. “You got two thank you’s and a ‘God bless you’ out of that?”

Back in the room, we find Chuck and Phyllis alive, uninjured and clean, with squeaky wet hair. The TV is off. We load our tired selves and wet beach towels back into the car and drop Phyllis at the office to return the key.

After what seems like a long time, she returns with this tale: “He smiled and said to me, ‘I didn’t know about you when you first came in here. I just didn’t know what to think. But everyone in life has certain needs and, as it turns out, I was able to meet your needs. I just didn’t realize you would be able to meet my needs, too. God bless you.’” We had no idea Norman was such a deep fellow.

By the time we get up the next morning, water is restored, after 36 long, dry hours. In spite of Phyllis’ promise, the story of showers for a green pepper spreads quickly through the neighborhood. Some even suggest that next time water goes out we all line up in front of number 124 at the Stardust, each holding a beach towel and a green pepper.

It isn’t that Phyllis can’t keep a secret. It’s the rest of us who can’t keep a secret.



# nutritional security and the power of garbage

“STEVE’S PRODUCE DEPARTMENT SPECIALS!” reads the seductive neon sheet at a chain super market in a small Minnesota town. Steve labors diligently to keep the produce gorgeous. Several times daily, he and his staff sort and trim, stuffing box after box with blemished or damaged fruits and vegetables. After all, his competitors are doing the same. It’s a matter of which produce gallery will tempt the consumer to part with some greenbacks.

By three in the afternoon the job is done and there are several stacks of boxes in the back room, ready for the blue dumpster behind the store. Soon, a truck will haul the dumpster’s contents to a landfill for unceremonious burial. Like archeological digs, landfill plugs reveal that much of the food, deprived of oxygen in the tightly packed environment, never degrades, but appears whole years later. This food is even deprived of the opportunity to return to the earth to nourish future growth.



It all begins innocently one summer afternoon. As usual, I bicycle the scenic five miles to town to do my grocery shopping, arriving in time to find Steve trimming the cabbages. He has a box full of crisp, juicy, slightly blemished or broken leaves. Curiosity propels me to inquire about the fate of the box. "The dumpster," he replies perfunctorily, then adds, "Sometimes a customer takes some home for a dog." "Oh," I say, with my own quasi-vegetarian canines in mind, "May I get some too, sometime?" "Sure," he answers, generously.

A couple of weeks later, with a short shopping list and room on my bike, I decide to lay claim to Steve's "dog food." Since he is finished trimming, he takes me to the produce receiving room with the instruction, "Take what you want. It's going to the

dumpster after three o'clock." He takes off, hurrying to attend to the arrangement of the kiwi. What stands before my disbelieving eyes are many large boxes. Most are filled with fruits and vegetables with minor breaks or blemishes, or stray grapes, fallen away from the cluster. Although some pieces have mold, the ratio of mold to breakage or blemishes is small. That day I ride a heavy bike home. The dogs are overjoyed.

I begin an experiment. For the next nine months I do not buy any produce. Weekly, I bike home with a load of great garbage, though still a mere fraction of Steve's discards. My grateful friends begin to take home loads, reporting that the fruit is as good as or better than they could buy. Now and then Steve has something special, like the big box of fresh, small

## garbage soup

Here's your chance to ask your produce manager for lettuce leaves, radish greens, onions, celery, broccoli, cabbage and other salvageable vegetables that are destined for the landfill. They will come to delicious good use in the following simple soup.

### INGREDIENTS

- three oz. package ramen noodle soup (with seasoning packet), any flavor
- 4 cups liquid—may be combination of water, broth, salmon juice\*, pot liquor from steamed vegetables, etc.
- chopped "garbage" vegetables, 1 to 2 cups—use your judgment
- a few drops of hot sauce
- 2 ounces tofu, cubed, or small pieces cooked meat or fish

### DIRECTIONS

- Bring liquid, hot sauce, vegetables and meat or fish to a boil.
- Add noodles and reduce heat to a slow boil for 3 minutes.
- Turn off heat and stir in seasoning packet.
- Makes 2 large servings.

\*From Salmon Party Patties



new potatoes with freckles from the soil. "Why are you throwing these out, Steve?" I ask with undisguised surprise. "Those spots make them too ugly for the customer," he replies with annoyance (and the implication that I do not merit the term "customer"). I take as many potatoes as I can manage, leaving many pounds behind. As I suspect, they are sweet and delicious.

I am Steve's nemesis. By this time, he cannot refuse me entrance to the back room, though it is obvious that he would like to. Every non-verbal fiber of his being speaks to his wish that the garbage could be secret again. He seems confused about it too, uncertain whether to allow me to reduce the waste when

he guesses I won't pad the cash register. All his aesthetic effort should reflect itself beneficially at the cash register. But then, he can rationalize that the waste is worth the profit from all the "real" customers. Real customers have aesthetic standards for the product and its presentation, here in America, land of progress.

That's why Steve and his Produce Perfection Gang go to all the trouble of peeling onions and shrink wrapping them in plastic to glisten under the lights, enticing customers to spend triple for them. I bring home a couple dozen of these onions with small areas of mold under the plastic. That's what happens to onions peeled of their own protective skin and



wrapped. They can't breathe. Is a profit turned on these onions, or do they function like Christmas ornaments to enhance the department?

Early in my experiment I call the St. Paul Food Shelves. A knowledgeable woman seems excited to discover she is talking to a doctor interested in a fresh food bank. We talk for a long time. She subsequently sends me materials about the existing Food Shelf. In essence, however, she indicates that an infrastructure to handle fresh produce and get it to those in need does not exist. The closest thing to it is day-old bakery and restaurant items which are distributed on a limited basis. My idea, though interesting, is only half-baked.

We are a society with a huge military arsenal, with a Mall of America, with executives and ball players on seven-figure incomes, but we don't know how to feed our growing population of under-nourished people. We fail to appreciate that we cannot have national security without nutritional security. We cut down trees to make paper to put through machines to print food stamps, distributed through elaborate networks, to folks who go to supermarkets to buy expensive, highly-processed, over-packaged, ready to eat food full of empty calories, while through the back door of the grocery store, on its way to the burgeoning landfill, is dumped highly nutritious produce we call garbage. In some cities grocery store employees pour bleach over food in the

## ***cabbage rolls***

Boil or steam a large cabbage until pliable but not mushy. Set separated leaves aside. Save the juice.

### **FILLING:**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

2 lbs. ground turkey  
2 cups cooked rice  
2 Tbsp. honey  
1 small to medium onion  
1 egg  
2 Tbsp. lemon or lime juice  
1 1/2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. pepper  
2 tsp. paprika  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
1 tsp. savory or tarragon

### **DIRECTIONS**

Sauté ground turkey, breaking it into little pieces as it cooks. Remove as much fat as possible. When fully cooked, empty meat into large strainer and rinse briefly with hot water to remove additional fat. Chop or grind meat with onion in food processor (or meat grinder). Remove to bowl and add remaining ingredients. Mix well. Make a firm roll of a heaping tablespoon of mixture and place in center of each cabbage leaf. Fold leaf to completely enclose mixture.

### **SAUCE:**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 large onion, chopped  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
1/2 tsp. paprika  
1 c. hot cabbage juice  
1 large and 1 small can tomato sauce (about 24 oz. total)  
1 small can tomato paste (6 oz.)  
1/2 c. brown sugar (to taste)  
1/4 c. lemon or lime juice

### **DIRECTIONS**

Into Dutch oven or roaster place chopped onion, hot cabbage water, paprika and pepper and stir. Arrange cabbage rolls on top, along with the inner cabbage core, cut in quarters. In a bowl, mix tomato sauce, tomato paste, brown sugar and lemon (or lime) juice. Pour over cabbage rolls. Cover and bake at 350° for 1 1/4 hours. Serve hot with rice or couscous. Makes 24 rolls, or dinner for 12 people. Freezes well.



dumpsters to discourage the hungry from searching for a meal in the alleys.

I have an idea that the power of garbage could restore the nutritional security of our society and the world. What if:

People rise up to rescue garbage from the jaws of the dumpster, the oblivion of the landfill?

The under-fed work with the fed to ensure basic nutrition for everyone?

Under-used school and community kitchens open their doors?

Students receive credit for garbage studies, creative cookery and working side by side, nourished and under-nourished together, to prepare fruit and vegetable feasts?

People who prepare this food are compensated for

their efforts with a wage and food, while their children are cared for and invited to the meal?

Grocers make high priorities of sorting and delivering garbage to preparation sites and receive incentives for their efforts?

Infrastructures are designed to solve the problem of hunger?

People realize the power of garbage to reduce waste and hunger?

What if no one were content until there is Nutritional Security in the world?



## *the produce department*

If you pick up a small, green plastic basket  
the flimsy kind  
with a pint of strawberries  
and a berry falls out  
into the wooden crate  
you will put it back, won't you?

If when your berry falls out you notice  
it is not as big and juicy as one  
catching your eye  
in another pint basket  
not the one you carefully chose  
you will exchange one berry for the other.

Suppose there are several loose berries  
fallen out of baskets into the crate  
unclaimed berries  
not necessarily belonging to any basket  
you will take one of these if they are red  
if they fit into yours (on sale 39 cents).

How many berries make a pint?  
as many as will balance in your basket.





## hotel pool, pacific

from my terra cotta tower  
across a fenced balcony  
I note fellow travelers below  
white skies burning  
North Americans, Europeans  
comforted by the sanitary bliss  
of the pool enclosed  
by iron railing

down at sea level  
Mexican families  
dance at water's edge  
tossed by wild frothy waves  
confined to life






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## hoping me fish

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scarcely one degree of rotation of the head  
 en route to open sea  
 the gliding gull ogles  
 hoping me fish

I am another bobbing irrelevance  
 a girl next to a buoy  
 in this briny expanse

how simple and impossible  
 to submerge my being with the diverse life  
 of the spotted striped neon  
 willowy fins protruding eyes points tentacles

no argument or agreement between them  
 no murky jealousies and betrayals  
 disturb the clean design of survival and demise

many years now I swim out beyond the pounding surf  
 tread to my own rhythm  
 imagine this my audition for scales and fins  
 observed by invisibles who wish me edible  
 while I, reckless, wish me fish





## undocumented tourists

we meet back at the airport a week later  
some bring sun roasted bodies  
others have devoured a rain forest of novels  
mastered groomed golf courses  
tennis courts

some carry stuffed magenta baskets  
others red velvet sombreros with gold piping  
there are those with trophies from the sea  
others saturated with Tequila  
some aerobically transfigured

but most of us are undocumented tourists  
with a reluctant confession  
that we came here urgently  
needing to surrender worries to the ocean breeze  
to reverse the shrinking of our imaginations  
to trade for congruence  
with waves, whistling gulls, bougainvilleas



# seafood lasagna



## INGREDIENTS:

- 10 marinated dried tomato halves (optional)
- 1 lb. imitation crabmeat (surimi seafood)
- 8 oz. lasagna noodles
- two 10-oz. packages frozen chopped spinach (thawed)
- 24 oz. carton 1% or non-fat cottage cheese
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. lemon pepper
- 1/4 tsp. ground cayenne pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- 1 cup grated Swiss or mozzarella cheese

## DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- Drain marinated tomatoes.
- Chop or flake seafood into small pieces.
- Cook noodles and drain.
- Mix well in a bowl: thawed spinach, cottage cheese, salt, lemon pepper, cayenne pepper and egg.
- In 9" x 13" baking dish evenly distribute 1/4 of cottage cheese/spinach mixture.

Then layer as follows:

- 1/3 noodles
- 1/3 seafood
- 1/4 cottage cheese mix
- 1/2 Parmesan
- 1/3 noodles
- 1/3 seafood
- 1/4 cottage cheese mix
- 1/2 Parmesan
- 1/3 noodles
- 1/3 seafood
- 1/4 cottage cheese mix
- Top last layer with Swiss cheese.

Separate Swiss cheese to make room for the 10 marinated tomato halves, arranged in two rows, in what will be the centers of 10 rectangular slices.

Bake at 350° covered for 1/2 hour.

Then uncover and continue baking 20 to 30 more minutes, until goldenbrown.

Serves 10.

