

There is comfort in recipes
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Recipes

In late October the oranges on my tree start changing colour. Half green, half orange
Getting ready to become full. Seasons seem to follow a recipe.

I bake a cake with a friend in a different continent so I can write, with.
Flour and butter, my hands are made of mud.
Building up the components of my b o d y
Inside where the promise is, I am.

The warmth of the oven heats up our Transatlantic kitchen. A line between.

There is comfort in following an instruction
As a woman I have been trained to know this.

In times of chaos I turn to the oven so that I may be told gently what to do,
I am taught this is chemistry, that in science there is sureness.

Mediums: flour, sugar, salt
I fill my cup.

*The house a woman creates is a Utopia. She can't help it—can't help trying to interest her
nearest
and dearest not in happiness itself but in the search for it.¹*

Time in the kitchen passes forward
Choosing,
cutting,
deciding, placing, tasting.

The properties of the ingredients are re-formed in order to nurture (nature) my b o d y.

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Wartime wacky cake

mix the dry ingredients together; cocoa etc.
dig two small holes in the bowl and fill with vinegar, mayonnaise.
Stir
then burn to a crisp in a heart-shaped pan, *don't eat*.

My pleasure in the domestic brings me little joy
But sometimes it is better than looking at my phone

as soon as the grief as soon as a ghost begins to shake me from the inside²

Wherever I go I make ntolmadakia. Now, it is more ritual than recipe.
leaves, onion, rice, oil, mint, salt, pepper:

Find out where to buy the vine leaves or better, collect them yourself in the right season.
I am always looking for small ones as they make the smallest bites—slow eating—tasting time.
I soften them in warm water—in the blink of an eye—otherwise they become too weak to hold the rice.
Too soft to keep the memories. Time is fast in its slowness.
Prepare the rice, coarse rice.

Onion

Onion deserves a paragraph on its own. I see the shape of my grandmother's hands which held it—tightly. Her bond to my body. I see her ring with the two initials of her grandmother's name, I see time and continuation, I see the scientific accuracy of the repetition of flavour.

I cut the onion by holding it tight in my palm, slashing it thin as a breeze: first, vertical cuts, then horizontal cuts; the tiniest cubes, invisible if not for their aroma.

Mint, a lot, trimmed as thinly as possible.
Olive oil—the One who cures my hands, treatment.
An idea of salt and pepper.

In the recipe I find a piece of harmony, like in Chopin's music. I read it over and over again. In its repetition I find the history and it becomes firm as a stone of gold.

The recipes carry the smell, taste, HER
Like cooking, birth moves only forward.

Jewels

I was thinking of writing about jewelry,
how I received it instead of toys when I was a little girl.
(A kiss on my hand, asleep in the night)

Growing up, gold was a small appreciation.

I was lying down in my aunt's bed on a puffy blanket, with an image of a huge lion in front of me.

Looking at it made me dream of where it came from.

I knew nothing about Africa then, nor about the doorkeepers in Mycenae.

My aunt would lay in front of me a handful of small golden rings.

I shared two feelings: sorrow and amazement. Sorrow because it was not a Barbie, amazement for the feeling of the lion and its golden colour.

The rings would vary in shape and the rocks would be purple, white, green and light blue.

Always shining. I would pick them up one by one from the pile, or all together, to hear the sound they made. Trying them on I would dream stories of their possibilities, firm in my tiny fingers.

I felt pure joy then in choosing, because now they were part of my dreaming.

I wish I remembered more about those not chosen.

At a silent auction in my grandma's care home one Christmas I win a tiny golden ring. So tiny it is sharp, with the smallest diamond I have ever seen. I think the auction has been rigged. Even as a young girl I mistrust the gift.

My first diamond.

Playing is playing. Playing is laughing is cheating death—my hands filled with mud but my ring always there, shining.

It gave me security. As does the chemistry of my b o d y.

I had to turn and look at my ring often, my diamond glance, to make sure that I hadn't lost it. Once my body was in sight, I returned to a stable condition of knowing myself. Where I was. I was there.

As a girl I learned that I would take care of others. As a woman I try to include myself in the care.

I was the keeper of the ring and vice versa; suspended between materiality and offering. Keeping it safe was my duty and/or my playing of trust, you might say.

I bought my own ring when I was of age. Pure gold in the shape of a U, holding my finger, surrounding a round white shell in the shape of a circle, penetrated with a golden nail. From India, it becomes the valuable stone that covers me like a blanket. Balance always. Over the blue of the sea, over a warm cup.

Mistrusting the gift of oneself.
mother, grandmother,
aunt,
me.

Am I an I?
I become a name.
We wear each other, gold and the sea.
The she is blue and the air as well.

Hey Power, how did a horseshoe turn into a girl?

The amber. The story of a forest. Most important was the instruction that came with it. "Always keep inside wool so that it doesn't lose its shine". Again the recipe, the blanket, the instruction, the loan.

The Body (and Language)

The languages of the bodies before me are a keen and potent legacy I cannot escape.

In the outskirts of town a sign says, "SINGLE MOMS OIL CHANGE"

I write through them and with them; they become my nature.

*I am heavy with the weight of silenced inner lives
what did they hum while they worked?
In ancient times there were hits, too.*

*Even now
My eyes that hurry to see no more are painting, painting
Faces of my lost girl. O golden rings
That tap against cheeks of small magnolia-leaves³*

In Modigliani's drawings, I see the penetration of the sign. I know only the outline of the women; the material is pencil, history, his touch.

No desire for naming, often I see inside my own line, and try to speak the names.

Animals

My mother says, *and no ship exists to take you from yourself.*

Is our East your South?

I write fast; the texts serve our common landscape. An ongoing walk with you across the sea, but before the offering, the loan. WE PAUSE.

As a child my unknown relatives became animals

My aunties, cipher cats

animals know their duties: safety, eating, mating; they claiming their existence.

Does protocol protect memory?

I listen to the text's voice, when you read would you listen too?

In the text itself the safety is found between the spaces of the letters,
like the ring between my fingers, like the blue who dresses us all.

My grandmother lunches with the queen.

I stick a sock into the back of my pants: a tail

"Flowers do not think of competing with other flowers. They just bloom"⁴

In her house there was a kind of solarium.

Right in the middle the ceiling was clear glass, reached straight through to the sun.

Fake teal plants and ceramic animals, everything blue and white.

Can the light be imitated? Does physics know how to be the sun?

I become a fish but my gills disgust me.

The care system

Small Duralex glasses cut like diamonds at the breakfast table.

Dry cakes, old roasts, chef Boyardee in the microwave.

I choose to dance in a home where the floor is made out of stones. The flank of the constructions holds firm its use.

*But will he (she) know where to find you,
Recognize you when he (she) sees you,*

*Give you the thing he (she) has for you?*⁵

*Do I want to know the animalistic convictions of my body?
Can I give you the stories of my components? Can I offer you the history of me, the
women, the men?
Can their teaching be measured in an educational project or is it different?
Like: A rose is a rose when she is of a rose cut, a loan diversifies my stories.*