MEAT FOR TEA

VOL 11 ISSUE 2
THE VALLEY REVIEW

CONFIT

Meat for Tea: The Valley Review

Meat for Tea: The Valley Review was founded by Elizabeth MacDuffie and Alexandra Wagman. We are a non-academic affiliated magazine committed to recognizing and featuring the work of the artists, writers, and musicians living in western Massachusetts and beyond.

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Extra special thanks to Joseph Boisvere for his tireless efforts. He will be missed - his shoes will be difficult to fill.

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salutations from the staff

I recently saw a headline that within a few years there would be software capable of translating the language of dolphins for humans to understand. This seemed like pure hubris to me, an aspiring translator, so I got the idea to run a piece of writing through Google Translate, starting in English, then to another language, and then another before finally getting back to English. So this is my Confit intro in its original, then its iteration by Google after passing through French and German.

Confit

There is a sense in which cooking has everything to do with how much fat one uses. The most austere techniques that one employes, steaming and boiling (and their attendant variations: poaching, blanching, etc.) use no fat at all to conduct the heat of the flame, and instead let liquid or gaseous water do the job, imposing an upward limit of around 212 degrees Fahrenheit upon the heat that may be applied directly to the surface of, say, a bean. Then there comes the introduction of the much more heat resistant lipids, olive, but especially common canola and flavorless grape seed oils, and suddenly you're searing, sautéeing, scrambling, hitting the edge of the egg with may times the BTUs you were with water. Roasting is searing's oven-bound relative, rendering a roasts own fats to slide along its surface and crisp its outer extremes. Then it gets decadent; deep-frying in canola, peanut, or even occasionally animal fat is flashy, violent, but ultimately only skin deep. Few foods can withstand more than a few minutes of boiling fat before stiffening up, often leaving a soft, cool center, or else ejecting mozzarella, cream cheese, or some other liquid filler into your precious fat where it floats up, sizzles, and dissipates. In order to really get your chunks of pork butt, your rubbed and rinsed duck legs, to the proper extreme, the only option is to cook slowly, completely submerged in the rendered fat of such an animal, covered, in the oven and at a low temperature. It brings the braise to its logical conclusion, dispensing with the watery, evaporation-prone braising liquid and substituting for it quarts of radically inert and aromatic fat. And the more you use it, the richer it becomes.

candied

There is a sense in which the kitchen has everything to do with the amount of fat used. The most rigorous techniques used are to steam and boil (and the following variations: poaching, bleaching, etc.) do not use fat to conduct heat from the flame, and instead allow the liquid or gaseous water to work limit imposed upwards about 212 degrees Fahrenheit to heat which can be applied directly to the surface of, for example, a bean. Then there was the introduction of many persistent fat, olive oil to heat up, but especially rapeseed oil and tasteless velvet, and suddenly get off, you do, she mixes you hit the edge of the egg sometimes BTU with which you water. Roasting is the report of the oven, cleanly roasted fat makes glide along its surface and its utmost clean. Then it becomes decadent; Frying in rape, peanut or sometimes animal fat is conspicuous, violent, but ultimately only in depth. Only a few foods can withstand more than a few minutes of fat boiling before stiffening, often leaving a sweet and fresh center, or ejecting mozzarella, fresh cheese or other liquid into your valuable fat where it floats, whistles and dissolves. To really get your songs to finish pork grinding your duck cobs and rinsed in quite adequately, the only option is to cook slowly, completely immersed in the fat of such an animal, covered, oven and low temperature. It brings the embers to its logical conclusion that the aqueous cooking liquid, driven by evaporation, is removed and replaced by the radically inert and flavor fat displacements. And the more you use, the more it will reach.

Joseph

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Jenna Ziemba.

london journal - a loveprose poem

Bronwen Hodgkinson

Prologue. away too long from the city i love.

Day one.

airports flight and customs a pleasant goodhumored breeze. Wanted to squeal and kiss the ground but adulted and grabbed the tube to hotel, dropped off bag, walked walked walked got a little weepy with citylove then sad for whatmighthavebeens and shouldcouldhavebeens then walked more on no sleep but full of nervous energy and and a thumping excitement migraine. Break for work then walk walk eat. Catch my breath and sleep. Tomorrow full consciousness catchmybreath and walk walk art warmbeer oldfriend.

Day two.

cafe americano because everything else is made with milk. why. feel like a blinkingloudtouristalarm but need strong black coffee. croissant aux amandes at offthebeatenpath lovelyfrench cafe left with fullthigh powdered sugar stains. Note to self: no more things with powdered sugar. or wear white. Walked to design museum to see wellmadethings that make you feel old if you remember them. Hello typewriter walkman white ipod payphone punkrock. Walked through holland park where I used to go to see wildtame rabbits that would slowhop unafraid for free snacks. Walked to oxford street omg tourist crush chain store hell how did I forget this. Detoured down park lane through mayfair ahhh lovely buildings oscar wilde walked here and so did i. oh so many bentleys. felt megawealth discomfort. Walked five fitbitmiles. Needed bandaids remembered to ask for plasters. Free public toilets are not a thing anymore but museums are free hello National Gallery. Too many people looking at phones instead of art in front of art. Another note to self: come back early morning before tourmobs. Stood at top of steps and gapemouthed at the shouldertoshoulder touristocean filling Trafalgar Square. Was it always like this? Been away too long couldn't find charing cross road through the crowd without googlemapcheating. (brain thinking words at stutterspeed while I try to memorywrite it all down). Covent garden for pubs and natter with sweet ageless collegemate and I'm full of envylove that she stayed in this best of cities. jetlag sleepiness and warm beer hits hard and fast. Maybe sleep in tomorrow. Maybe slow down. Maybe not.

Day three.

woke up flattened with a cold or jetlag or just overdiditness. day mostly wasted on bed sleep tea tv. dammit.

Day four.

cafe americano please then over to soho today. Tube to oxford circus omg more touristmobs but guess I'm a tourist too today but one with streetsmarts and iknowwhereimgoingness. Distracted by lure of uniqlo blesstheirshortinseams then brewdog soho pub for delicious warmbeer and macncheese and wish i'd bought more damn shares and notice the place is

about 90% men. Huh. What does this mean in 2017 I don't know. In the 80s women could still be refused service at the bar but we've come alongwaybaby or have we? Head to berwick street which has had a food and textiles market for over a hundred years (a wee youngster by London street market standards) and one entire side of the street is wrapped in builders fabric and further down the street is a crampedmess of scaffolding and mesh over so many buildings. please don't let soho go the way of nycsoho but think it's too late. I see a large bald man in sparkly blue heels and that makes me feel right about the world again. Walk back up to sit awhile in soho square a pretty quiet little oasis away from the westend crush. there is a tiny halftimbered building in the center that looks like it's fourhundred years old but really was built in the 20s as an entrance to an electric substation beneath and now it's just a tiny magnificent gardeners shed that I love. Walked through the theatre district to get to Piccadilly Circus tube. More touristocean what are they looking for what are they doing besides knocking people over with their enormous rucksacks. Rick steves needs to stop telling people to travel like that. Tube to pimlico to Tate Britain to see Hockney show but it's sold out and I'm convinced it's the rucksack mob buying tickets but they're not really into Hockney just came to the Tate because it's on the tour map. Plenty of tickets available for Queer British Art 1861-1967 and I think hellyes wilde and beardsley and coward and bacon oh my. It was quiet and brilliant and beautifulsad. Rush hour sardinetintube back to hotel missdontmiss that commute. Detour down side streets and notice all the notyetbloomed pollarded plane trees and how knobblystrange they look and realize I miss them too. Early night thinking what to rediscover tomorrow.

Day five.

tube to borough market organic fresh pressed wheatgrass hipster juice yes please heal me ohsomuch delicious food. walk over London bridge. river at lowtide lovesound of water lapping lowtide shore. cafe americano please then to st dunstans shell of warbombed wren church now a secret garden hidden amongst tall buildings and as peacefulpretty as remembered. walk past tower hill more touristmobbed than anywhere selfie sticks everywhere. and rucksacks. Late lunch in pub i was thrown out of twenty years ago when my flatmate tossed her pint on leering bartender. Bland pint, food awful must be karma. think about how bothered i am by touristmobs. Maybe I just want time alone with this beautiful city i so abruptly left. Like reconnecting with an old lover rushing headlong into its arms can't stop to breathe mad love how to pick up where we left off can we make it work again.

Day six.

batchbrew coffee please (wheeeee). work morning on laptop thankful for portablefreelancework. afternoon down to clapham south of the river where touristsdontgo. longleisurelybrunch with lovelytamara in clapham old town. over to pub on gorgeous green common then drive back to earls court in tamara's vw polo. wish we had these adorablesmallercars in horsepowerhungry states. drinks in our old local pub astonishment the olddirtydive is cleanandbright familyfriendly. old aussie bloke first trip ever complains he came here because thisiswheretheaussiesgo but i said sorry mate you're twenty years toolate. he said too right and returned to scribblingaway in his spiralbound notebook probably writing about his trip kindredspiritmaybe. tamara and i and three more lived in a house down the road collegemates when earls court was grungycheap colorful full of aussies gays and students now cleanedup gastropubs confusedtourists highstreetchainstores i miss the divepubs bedsits clonezone latenightgayclubqueues. was it more

special then in anothertwentyyears will someone else sit here and think i miss the gastropubs chainstores milliondollarterracehouses of the 2010s? twodrinklightweights nostalgiadrunk both gottawork tomorrow morning goodnightlondon.

Day seven.

coffee flatwhite please. notetoself stick to americano. tube to embankment to hampstead walk through side streets to parliament hill fields best view of the city from the highest point on the heath. coldandwindy up here today but i still love this massivebeautifuloldpark. often more residents than tourists up here. hampstead is posh pretty villagey eeeee hello donaldsumpter becool smileandnod. walk stroll stop look walk repeat marvelous place to get lost. keats orwell freud wildesbelovedbosie walked here. fitbitwalked more than thirtyfivemiles since monday. walkstroll down to belsize park to tube. off at camdentown it's the nextstop whynot. biggest touristmobs ever but most are moreinteresting and goodeats here. oldstreetpunks still touristtrapping punters cash for photos. i wonder is it an easier living now that everyone has a cameraphone and everytourist wants a selfie with a realauthenticbritishpunk (tm). delicious streetfood excellent peoplewatching eastersunday bankholidayweekend everyoneishere. line around block for tube entrance ticketbarrierconfusion stumpedtourists verypatientstaff. oldstation not meant for twentyfirstcentury crowds ninetysix spiralsteps down to platform toobusy no lifts or escalators down sorry. squeeze onto train changetwice back to hotel. want to walkmore but needtoworkabit pack travel upnorth tomorrow.

Interval.

train up north from my window pretty countryside greenhills brightyellow rapeseedfields infullbloom sheepofcourse clouds getting thicker and darker it rains more in the northwest but i like greygloomyskies maybe it's inmyblood.

Day eight.

arrive macclesfield northerntown it's been so long hellofamily yearsbecomeminutes. drive with cousin through nearby villages up over highestpoint past buggersknob (yesthatsright) steephillywindy vertigoroads peakdistrict sobeautiful so utterlyengland. up past house where father was born and grandparents postwar tinygrocershop now a privatehome. oldstonehouses now desres. back in macc dinner cousins chattingpastmidnight.

Day nine.

milky tea please. drive with cousin off to crosbybeach merseyside see onehundred antonygormsley castiron selfportrait lifesizesculptures standing 3km across beach. such marvelousculture of statesponsored publicart in britain. (ifyoulook gormleystatues everywhere angelofthenorth gateshead lovelove). into liverpool neverknew liver birds (LYEver birds) were a thing. notrealbirds. mythicalbirds. museum of liverpool ephemerahistory. yesofcourse walked by cavernclub beatles touristtrap. lennon must be gravespinning. back to macc. offto localpub local ale stories laughterchat oldphotos yetagain uptilmidnight.

Day ten.

up to the lovelyhills again windingroads through villages stonehouses wilddaffodils everywhere. drystonewalls patchwork landscape fieldsofsheep lambing season somany tiny lambiepies cuteoverload.peakdistrict steephills deepvalleys singlelane roads though wincle to wildboarclough over shutlingsloe highest point in cheshire. spectacularviews of this greenandpleasant land. there is calm in these hills breathe deep. past macclesfield forest through teggs nose back to macc for tea. evening train to manchester twelfth night royalexchange theatre. threetier metalframe roundtheatre suspended from tops of massive marblecolumns hangs in center of enormous greathall. actors in pit minimal stage superb acting. late train back. goodnight macc.

Day eleven.

milky tea and fullenglish breakfast. off with cousin to northwales today. my names are welsh bronwen gwynedd no welshblood but stillfeel drawnhere. to angelsey through llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrn-drobwllllantysiliogogogoch along coast to plas newydd statelyhome and gardens of poshmarquesses of angelsey. walk through forestgarden ivycoveredtrees bluebells in bloom kneeldown closeup photo of flowers fuckinghell hand in stingingnettles howcouldiforget. then to ruins of moatsurrounded beaumaris castle. lunch at chippy eatoutside underwatch of vigilant seagulls. visit penmon priory holywell of st seiriol sixthcentury tinyhermitage hobbithole. shortwalk up path to rockycoast penmonpoint perfect coolgreyday to be on welshshore. puffinisland in distance hoping for stray adorablepuffin to fawnover here onshore. noluck. walk to edge of coast tideout tidepools roughblackrock soothingsound of waves and lighthousebell could sit here and not think and justlisten. there was calm in the peakdistricthills and here there is calm by the sea. keep breathing deep.

Day twelve.

fivedays upnorth visiting family. somuch tea. suchbeautiful countryside. quickwit cousin besttourguide goodconversation kept me laughing. kindest aunt lovelycousins catchingup wish an ocean of distanceandtime hadn't separated us forsolong. quiet lastday laptopwork then posh alderley edge for coffee and celebrityspotting. flashcars but nostars. indiandinner forseven then coffeeandnatter andmemories of gonebeloveds. this is a warmplace. train tomorrow backtolondon sadtoleave sosoon.

Day thirteen.

train back to london. euston to kingscross change lines past olddailystop barbican to whitechapel to hipsterhotel. flashbackmemories at barbicanstation can even remember what i wore to firstinterview (docs whitejeans rosepatterned shirt dressedtoimpress). lovedthatjob somany regrets i never returned. sotired needtocrash but bricklane is shortwalk from hotel past slightly dodgyarea to rapidly gentrifying shoreditch chockablockhipsters artisanal cerealshops craftbeertasting vintagevinyl locallyroasted chocolate somuch streetart love it here but fearweep for inevitable localculture obliteration but thisplace is alwayschanging maybe this is just the nextwave. huguenot to jew to bangladeshi to beardedhipster whowillbenext. still can get bestbagels saltbeef and a wickedcurry here. this area still lesstouristy no lookright warnings at streetcrossings. earlynight for earlymorning tomorrow lastfullday stillsomuch todosee.

Day fourteen.

last fullday in london. pourover coffee please. black. walk walk walked up bricklane looked for gilbertandgeorge noluck newspace still under construction. over to spitalfieldsmarket besteats at markets restrainedself from buying things wantneedwant ohsomany nicethings. walked to bishopsgate to moorgate architecturegawking. tube back to aldgate to whitechapelgallery eduardopaolozzi exhibit sogood. farewelltrip down bricklane morecoffee vintagemarket streetart. squeeze in laptopwork latedinner at hipsterhotel gottapack. wish i had moretime for this briefintense loveaffair. waitforme london i promise to return soon.

scarecrow hangs

Jane Yolen

"<T>he Scarecrow of Conciliation."–Teresa Matlock

He hangs there like some old corn god,
eyeing the furrows, hoping to see
some good old-fashioned humping going on,
anything to bring back fertility into the world.

Waiting on resurrection, that uncertain future,
where we all cavort in long draperies
or twang uncomfortable lyres, he smiles.
He cannot help it. The smile is painted on.

Deep inside that straw head, he remembers
dancing down the rows with a girl, a sulky dog,
an iron man, a large maned cat. A dream,
he thinks. But as with all scarecrows

life is not about living but conciliation—
making the elder gods happy, resolving
crow murders, keeping boys with matches
out of his vicinity, playing it safe.

It is the most human thing about him.

333: son of satan

Jane Yolen

Daddy's little boy,
horns on his head
just nubbins,
sparse hair an orange glow
the color of a nuclear explosion.

Taking time off from building
a local ghetto, the old deil
turns to his hag wife.
"What shall we name him?"

"Drumpf," she says.
"I like the sound of it."
The old one nods.
"It means goat's fart
in the old tongue.
He will grow into it."

Then they laugh,
a ripple of a energy
streaking through the atmosphere,
a temblor, an aftershock.

And the universe cringes.

soothing inventions

Jane Yolen

"Butter, he thought to himself, what a soothing invention"—Teresa Matlock

Butter, of course, sliding over the toast
as children down a snowy hill.
Toilet paper, of course, the catalogue
of earlier sins not to be mentioned.
Pasta, of course, in its straight and curly states,
a reminder that diversity, even in invention, matters.
Chocolate absolutely, which makes creamers
of us all, even those allergic to it, even them.

But what, you ask, of deep friers, the Edsel,
the Iron Maiden, bullets, and the political pundit?
Even God stumbles sometimes. Remember the platypus,
remember tsunamis, remember Lilith, Loki, Mel Gibson.
Remember the Holocaust and dead Egyptians
in the Red Sea.

eating salt

Jane Yolen

The spit of it,
your tongue alive
with venomous season,
the dish sullied,
friendship's wounds
sown with despair.

Why make things worse,
in-salted insult,
when kind meeting kind
makes better matter,
and a meal between
two consenting mates?

a poem is never finished

Jane Yolen

"A poem is never finished, it's abandoned."
– Paul Valery

See all those poems
abandoned on the highway,
trying to hitch a ride home?

I was one once, sprightly,
my rhymes held tightly
to my commodious breast.

I danced, sang, made promises
I couldn't keep, a little minx
of versification.

I didn't eat well, drank too much,
Consorted with song lyrics,
such bad companions.

Was left one night after hours.
Wretched, worn, growing old,
Missing hot food, showers.

Crawled my way back,
turned my life around.
Found a friendly journal.

The rest, while not history,
can be considered a miracle
of poetry.

the last piece of science

Jane Yolen

The last piece of the science puzzle
is lost on the floor somewhere.
no one is looking for it.

Desperate to be found,
small arms semaphoring,
subsisting on a grain of funding,

It waits to be discovered,
uncovered, recovered.
But dust settles over its face.

A mouse snacks on its edge
till the vacuum sucks the piece up,
carts it away.

There is a bonfire of the rest,
those pieces still malingering
in the box. Then the box itself.

A puzzle without that final piece
is no use to anyone, not even scientists,
so out they go, into the bonfire as well.

And the blank-faced people dance
around the blaze, expecting somehow
to keep themselves warm.

(Or at least how to make a new fire.)