

# MEAT FOR TEA

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THE VALLEY REVIEW

Yerba Maté





**Meat for Tea: The Valley Review**  
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**"Yerba Mate"**

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# TOUCH OF COLOGNE

Chathurani Ranathunge

Piyumi woke up to her grandma's gentle peck on her forehead. Her eyelids fluttered open as sunlight flooded her rosy dream and she reluctantly blinked as her sight accustomed.

"Hurry up chuti duwa, or we'll be late". Achchi amma's voice rang out in a rush.

She sat up cross legged on the bed and yawned wide.

Still a little murky from her sleep, her gaze followed her grandma as she hurried about the room, yanking open cupboard doors, pulling out clothes and dropping them on a growing pile on the bed. Piyumi tried to remember what was so important about the day and all of a sudden it dawned on her. Her mother was coming home, she recalled, and her rosy lips parted in a sudden radiant smile.

Her earliest memories of her mother came with a faint touch of cologne, a tingling sensation that remained untouched in her mind. Besides that she had neither any pain nor any happiness to link with her. She was just a far off beacon of memory that had little importance in Piyumi's life. For all of her five and a half years on earth, her closest companion had been her grandma and standing in the second place was her uncle whose family lived with them in their old, two bed roomed house.

Piyumi had asked her share of endless questions from her grandma though, but her response had always been the same, "Amma has gone off to a beautiful country, far far away. She will come back one day with lots of nice things for you chuti duwa".

Piyumi would widen her eyes and put on her trademark pout. "But when is she coming back Achchi amma?"

"Soon", would be Achchi amma's solid, instinctive reply and her expression would once more become blank, frozen behind the millions of crevices that outlined her face.

That day has finally come. Piyumi thought happily. She stretched out her small arms and leapt off the bed like a rabbit with a sudden surge of energy. Miraculously, she was back cleaned up in a matter of few minutes without any pushing and nudging and caused Achchi amma's wispy grey eyebrows to elevate higher than usual.

She stood with her arms lifted skyward as Achchi amma helped her in to the frilly pink dress that her uncle had given on her last birthday.

"Achchi amma"

"Hmm..." She felt Achchi amma's fingers running through her curly hair trying to smooth the tangles.

"Is Amma coming in a big aero plane?"

Achchi amma's hands momentarily stopped as she tied the ribbons around the pig tails. With a slight nod she bent to fasten the buckle on Piyumi's shoe. Oblivious to her grandma's lack of response, Piyumi continued to babble.

"How big is it Achchi amma, is it bigger than a bus? And how many drivers does it have? One isn't enough I think"

Achchi amma carried her in to the living room, her never ending questions trailing behind them. She placed her gently on the couch and headed towards the kitchen. That was when Keerthi mama burst in to the room with his wife and son following close by as if in a parade. Sure enough Auntie Sheela would have made a great item at a parade in her flower printed sari, high heels and the splash of violet that was her lips. Shehan would too, in his khaki shorts held firmly with the aid of a belt, neatly pressed cotton shirt which looked as if it would burst

any moment and shoot buttons all around and his short cropped hair that reminded Piyumi of poisonous needles.

Her uncle crossed the room in quick steps, lifted her off the couch and swirled her around.

“Now look who’s looking like an angel today”. In the background, Piyumi caught a glimpse of Auntie Sheela’s face that suddenly twisted in to an ugly mask.

“That’s not true” Piyumi whined. “I don’t have wings”

“Oh, but you will”. He laughed out heartily and placed her back on the couch. “Someday”

His eyes crinkled as she regarded him. Keerthi mama looked a little too old for his age with his thinning hair and fair skin that turned reddish when he went out in the sun. Achchi amma had once told her that he was two years elder than Amma. It made her think suddenly of how her mother must look like.

“Chuti duwa what are you thinking?” Keerthi mama gave her nose a little squeeze as he bent down to her level.

Piyumi shook off the disturbing thoughts and her mind drifted back to more interesting alleys.

“Keerthi mama, Amma will bring lots of nice things, won’t she?” she pondered. Before he could answer Auntie Sheela’s raspy voice rang out from the background.

“Why, of course Piyumi, she will bring so many that we’ll have to find a room to keep all of them”.

Her unusually sweet, sugary voice surprised Piyumi and made her stare at her with wide eyes. That was when she caught the mocking smile that made Auntie Sheela’s face cringe in all its contours. Shehan too smiled as if it was the best joke but for some reason kept glancing at both his parents uneasily. Keerthi mama turned to glare at his wife at the same moment that she started to examine her bright red nails with new found interest.

“Sheela!” His voice held a warning that suddenly shook the room with strong undercurrents.

She pivoted on her heels and stalked off in to her room in a sudden huff. Shehan stood rooted to the spot for a while as if debating with himself whether to follow her or not and in the end decided not to. Instead he strolled casually towards Piyumi, his textbooks for his English class tucked under his arm. Keerthi mama had now gone in to the kitchen. Flopping in to the vacant spot next to Piyumi on the couch Shehan opened one of his books to reveal its title page.

“How about a game?” he suggested. Seeing his wicked smile painted all over his face Piyumi knew it would be the same old one. She nodded in response and added in a small voice.

“No hard words this time okay”

“Okay”. He gave a nasty lopsided grin.

He pointed to the title of his book and watched her try to read. “You get five points if you get it right”.

Her eyebrows knitted in concentration she managed to read the second word right. “W-A-Y, way!” a triumphant smile lit her face

“What about the first one. Come on”.

Piyumi shook her head. Shehan snatched the book from her rudely and read it aloud. “Radiant way!”

Letting out a heartless laugh he cried out. "You can't even read that you stupid girl, you get no points!" Having completed his task so well, he scooted off to join his mother.

Piyumi blinked back tears as Achchi amma came back with a plate of rice. She inhaled the smell of sambol and fried dry fish and felt her mouth water instantly. As Achchi amma fed her she forgot all about Shehan's unkindness and the questions surfaced once more. She had so much to ask but Achchi amma seemed so unusually quiet.

"Achchi amma, do I look like Amma?" she clung to her grandma's arm with both her small hands and gazed up earnestly.

Achchi amma's hands froze in the mid air and her rheumy eyes gazed back at Piyumi for a prolonged moment before she finally answered solemnly. "Yes"

Piyumi wanted to know more but something in Achchi amma's pained expression made her sense its finality. She wanted to know why she didn't look like her father who died in an accident when she was small. Piyumi had believed this until one day Shehan had brought up the story in front of all her friends while they were playing. He had mockingly told her that her father had not died in an accident. The hint of suspicion had always nagged her like a prick of a needle every time she thought about it.

Piyumi watched the landscape change swiftly as the car maneuvered past the jostling vehicles. Greenery had thinned out and buildings have appeared out of the blue. People shoved past each other as they tried to cross the road, catch a moving bus or simply run along the pavements. Piyumi wondered why they were all in such a hurry.

The company in the car had retreated to their own private worlds. The heavy silence hovered above them like a clinging cloak. Piyumi sat between Achchi amma and Shehan and noticed that Auntie Sheela kept a constant gaze out of the window. After sometime Keerthi mama brought the car to a halt. He told Achchi amma that he will be back after Shehan's class and drove off leaving them in front of looming iron gates that shielded a huge building.

Achchi amma held her close as they joined the queue that went through the gates. Walking along the dark hallways, Piyumi wanted so badly to ask her whether this was the airport and where the aero planes were but she clung to her with all her strength, suddenly scared of all the unknown people around them.

They entered a spacious room at the end of a long snaky corridor. The room boasted of a long wooden table, two benches that ran along its length and a ceiling fan that made Piyumi want to spin around in circles. Just then a small woman appeared from another door. Piyumi found herself staring at an older, drained replica of her face. She walked briskly up to them and hugged Piyumi close to her heart. Her chest heaved in uncontrollable sobs and her whole body began to shake as if in an attempt to resist the haul of her uneven breaths. Her cries eventually subsided in to low whimpers and she held Piyumi at arm's length to run her eyes along every feature of her face.

Piyumi wanted to know what made her mother so sad but somehow it did not matter. Amma asked her so many questions and she found herself answering them without slowing down or think much about her own questions. Suddenly she stood up and involuntarily Piyumi slipped her small hand in hers. Tears welled up in Amma's eyes and she hurriedly turned away. Achchi amma stepped forward and carried Piyumi to the door.

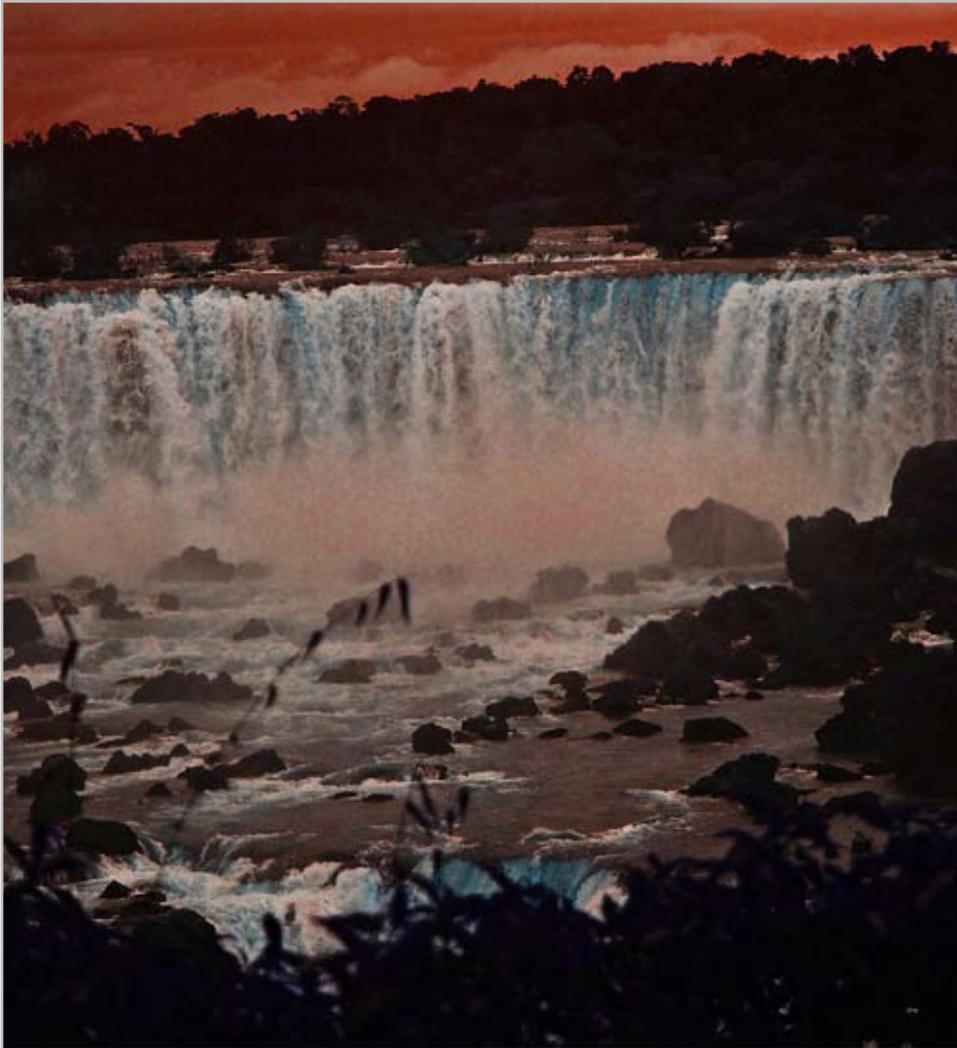
"Wait Achchi amma, isn't amma coming with us?" She craned her neck to look over Achchi amma's shoulder as they walked quickly along the passage.

"Not today Chuti duwa". Achchi amma stared ahead blindly. "Soon"

They stepped in to the glaring daylight and Piyumi blinked as her sight accustomed. Looking up at the big letters that stared back at her from the sign above the door they came through,

Piyumi tried to read them. The first word was hard but the second one was shorter. It read J-A-I-L.

No, it didn't make any sense either. Piyumi held on to Achchi amma with all her might and let drowsiness take over.



Keith Moul  
*Argentina - Iguazu Falls*

# HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Francis Raven

(a)

Because it is the present we know  
without certainty

we work back  
to know it better

but end up  
with ourselves

coarse topographers  
but necessary topographers

because it is human nature  
to stand here and need to know

what it would be like  
to stand there.

8

It is impossible.  
We know it is impossible

but necessary to ask this totality  
which is easy to want to forget

because it incompletes itself  
just as you walk towards its necessities.

(b)

If it's safe to blame the materials  
for where we live.

They don't even know how to play those anymore

Through a concept of nature, which is just the technology you were using then

Inevitably diverging from any possible utopia.

It's safe, but who used everything? Who forged the hammer?  
Who killed the radio star?

# THE MATERIAL CONDITIONAL OF BRICKS

Francis Raven

*"In the brick industry these days, everything old really is new again."*

This house was made of...

From...the pontification region.

Why don't you walk there?

Your mound in the city

Flouts its composition.

This house is made from solid cypress and features a steeply pitched,  
Shingled roof.

This house is made from cereal boxes leftover from my cereal wedding.

This house is shaped like meaning.

But where are you now?

In choice there is color (Cimarron, Terracotta,

Old Smoky, Beige-Rose,

Stained Ivory, Frontier Savagery,

Dirty Earth, Cloud Gray,

Cherokee, Red)

In color there is dwelling.

Because of where you've been

These scraps must know the final building,

Else the framed drawing without dimension.

Do all homes have poetry written into their bricks?

Perhaps:

"Where I am born, the metaphor begins its journey back."

It might be a train we're gathering.

We'll see what kind of metal we use

To know that stone's outcome.



## RAY NEADES HAS A POSSE

*January 28, 2010 at Sierra Grille, formerly the Baystate Hotel*

David Hayes

I was up one night and a chat box materialized on Facebook - it was Big Ray, as many fondly called him. Ray Neades was really an acquaintance of mine through the music scene of the early to late 90s, which of course had its nerve center, heart, and soul at The Bay State Hotel in Northampton. Ray had founded a band called Miss Reed that was rooted in real pop music (pop as a style of music, not Top 40) but played with VOLUME. I always remember him as a great and impassioned singer.

We started chatting again back in December and January as 2010 rolled in, often talking about Mike Watt, The Minutemen, FIREHOSE, talking about gear - two music nerds geeking out on all things music. Around this time, a dear friend of mine had gotten in a near-death motor vehicle accident. I told Ray about it, and he was offering prayers, and thinking about me and her. Ray and I hadn't seen each other in 12 years, and here he was just being a genuine sweetheart of a guy. It made such an impression on me. But then again, when you talk to his friends, they will all tell you that's the way he was. Ray Neades died several months ago, but on a snowy and brutally cold night in late January this past winter, the music community came out for Ray at The Sierra Grille, the old Baystate, and the former heart of the music scene around here.

It's a palpable vibe when you walk into that room. The amount of music, energy, love, pain, sweat, blood and spit that was emitted in that room has never left those walls. I knew I would see some old faces from the old Baystate scene, but as I approached the hallway and entered the room, musicians who were as passionate about music as Ray Neades were had already piled into the room - old friends, old bandmates, acquaintances, and music lovers everywhere. The event was a fundraiser for Ray's wife Sandy, and his close friends were visibly upset. However, the old vibe of the Baystate was like a warm fuzzy, if not updated, couch for all of us to sit on and take some comfort.

His friends had filmed the whole evening. I know Dave Trenholm and David LaBeouf did a lot in terms of pulling this show together (Dave Trenholm was a founding member of Miss Reed, and both he and Ray grew up in Greenfield).

Dave LaBeouf led off the night on solo piano by talking about Ray. He was visibly shaken and choked up at times, but we all had a toast to Ray, and Dave launched into "Cut My Hair" by The Who, apparently one of Ray's favorite songs.

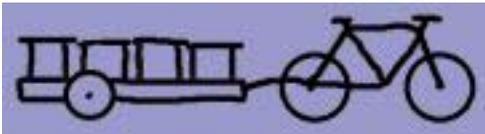
Then Paul Rocha got up to play some songs. He told the story of how Ray told him about this rock and roll guy he had met that he really dug, and that his name was Matt Pierce. I'm paraphrasing, but apparently Matt walked into the Baystate just afterward, and Ray told Matt what he had told Paul. Matt responded to Ray with a "fuck off!" and he hurriedly walked away. Ray then turned to Paul and said "SEE!!!" with a huge grin on his face! The whole room erupted in laughter; it was one of the highlights of the night and an insight into the coolness of Ray.

The remainder of the night featured superb mini-sets by a customized revival of Sourpuss (this

iteration with Jose Ayerve, Alyssa Marchese, Brian Marchese, Ken Maiuri and J.J. O'Connell), The Ray Mason Band (who's version of "Excitment Transfusion" almost shook the room into dry wall fragments and wood shards), Amy Fairchild, Bamboo Steamers, a supergroup trio of Tom Shea, Jim Weeks and Keith Levereaut (who did a ripping cover of Dirty White Boy by Foreigner), and of course Miss Reed, featuring guitarist Pete Cassani filling in for Ray. Also in Miss Reed was Dave Trenholm on guitar, Frank Padellaro on a bass that he built himself to play in Miss Reed, and Paul Pelis on drums.

The Miss Reed set was blistering, in a word. Filled with heavy and loud power pop tunes of the kind that Ray loved dearly. It was VERY LOUD, and you know Ray was smiling from the ethers from ear to ear. During the last song I was hanging out with Ray Mason listening to the music. Part of our view was blocked, so as the song ended I saw some strange motion occurring, and moved closer to see what was happening. Frank had his bass, not by the neck as is typical, but by the body of the bass, both hands firmly on each side, smashing it into the floor in a consistent rocking motion. He destroyed his bass that night, the bass (I believe) that he built to be in the band. It was, to me, very poetic. That bass had served its time, and now that Miss Reed had performed it's last set of music, it was time for it to disintegrate back from whence it came.

The same could be said for Ray Neades. I believe we all have different reasons for being on this planet, different lessons to learn and experiences to have. We come from nothing, we become something, and we go back to nothing, but how do we use our time while we are here? Ray filled his life with singing, performing, recording, and listening to music. That was the main point of this evening - Ray was first and foremost a MUSIC LOVER. As the Bob Mould song "See A Little Light" played sweetly over the main speakers at the end of the show, a song with such a great message, great pop structure, and a killer and uplifting chorus, I was reminded again of Ray's love for music. And then it made me remember my own love for music, which is the reason any musician starts down the path to becoming a musician themselves. As I said good bye to old friends, and walked out into the cold, windy and snowy night, I realized that this is the legacy Ray left us with - the love of music. And for that, we are eternally grateful to Ray Neades.



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# KOREAN GALBI MARINADE

Lindsay Scola

Though my roots lay somewhere between Ireland and Italy, my culinary palate spans the globe. I have always been particularly fascinated by Asian cultures and flavors. (In fact, I have spent the past several months trying to convince my fiancé that we should honeymoon in Asia because of the amazing beaches and landscapes. Truthfully, I really want to learn how to make the perfect pho in Vietnam or pad see ew in Thailand)

Last year while eating at a local Korean restaurant, I was reminded of how much I adore Korean galbi (also known as kalbi) short ribs. Somehow the marinade used in this dish turned a tough cut of meat- usually requiring hours of slow braising to be rendered edible- into something so moist and succulent that a few minutes on the grill were more than sufficient. It was at this point that I decided I was going to master this marinade at home.

After several months of trial and error, the following is the recipe I have come up with. I have used this marinade on anything from the traditional thin-sliced short ribs, to pork chops and chicken. However, I have found that it best serves to tenderize and add huge flavor to tougher, cheaper cuts of meat such as London broil. This salty, sweet, slightly spicy, grilled dish is perfect for a summer night on the deck with a bottle of wine and some good company. (As a disclaimer, my sister had declared this marinade to be so good that she “would pour in on cereal and eat it for breakfast.” While I’m not sure she would actually be willing to test the veracity of this statement, you get the point.)

## Korean Galbi Marinade

(makes enough marinade for 3-4 lbs. of meat)

1 cup light brown sugar

¾ cup soy sauce

½ cup water

¼ cup rice wine vinegar

2 tablespoons sesame oil

4 tablespoons garlic, minced

1 small Asian pear, grated on microplane or cheese grater (can substitute with a bosc pear)

2 tablespoons fresh ginger, grated on microplane or cheese grater

2-3 scallions, thinly sliced

1-2 tablespoons chili garlic paste (found in most markets in the Asian section)

Combine all ingredients. Stir well to incorporate the brown sugar. Marinate meat for a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 24 hours.

