

The following text is a collection of memories and reflections on eating. It takes its form through a series of diary-like entries that dive between the real and imagined, turning my personal history into stories that circulate around intimate moments at the table. The work begins by discussing the significance of the space I inhabit and how it impacts eating, how the home is a fundamental part of my relationship with food and how experiences are dictated by the people around us. Each chapter then stretches between the past and present, using memory to guide the current ideas I have about food. Childhood is used as a tether, my thoughts surrounding cooking and eating all founded in moments I cannot remember in full. I have incorporated visual cues to contextualise some of these feelings, using sight as a foothold for understanding and a way to develop meaning. The stories told throughout are reliant on my own readings, be it cookbooks or text conversations – it is all about the interaction of my body in a kitchen space. Many of the images are loosely based around two words I felt captured many of the feelings I have when interacting in a kitchen space. EMPTINESS and INDULGENCE. These two ideas have directed my research throughout, using them as opposing poles to place my work within. Each chapter leans towards these extremes in flexible movements, cycling through fears and fantasy as their disparate ideals become increasingly entangled through my research.

“It suddenly seemed astonishing that people should meet especially to eat together — because food goes into the mouth and talk comes out. And if you watch people eating and talking — really watch them — it is a very peculiar sight: hands so busy, forks going up and down, swallowings, words coming out between mouthfuls, jaws working like mad. The more you look at a dinner party, the odder it seems — all the candlelit faces, hands with dishes coming over shoulders, the owners of the hands moving round quietly taking no part in the laughter and conversation.”

Dodie Smith *I Capture the Castle*

18. I did not sleep deeply, I dreamt of your gaping blue mouth. I heard you gasp; I imagined a blue jay had just landed on our windowsill. It was fleeting and young. It was us at the precipice. Your body cracked open.

19. The prince of blue's eyes haunt me. I watch you dream that night, twisting under the covers murmuring in a way you only have once before. Discussions of divinity, of what is right. Tears leak through your charcoal lashes.

20. Everything changed. Fucking everything.

21. You once spoke of the shore, of us being in love and dancing as one. Of me leaving in the depths of night, with you left waiting. Your dreams breaking the boundaries of my reality, scorching my mind. I remember dancing, I remember your body pulsating against mine, but my departure remains lost to the tides.

22. You cried that day. Your body flooding then drowning, then a painful heat washing over forcing the deluge to begin again. It was a pain like no other, watching the light in your eyes only appear when the world offered you scraps of blue. The walks you took that week were long, you took to laying in icy water drawing the clouds in the sky. I didn't know what to do, years later I still don't know what to do. I took you to the hospital and waited, sat on a bench I filled my lungs with blue clouds, hours went by in silence. I thought of jay wings and peacock plumes, of things that could bring you back if only slightly. You walked out, sat next to me and all you said was that her eyes were a piercing pale blue, they were beating. We stayed.

23. The legacy you are now a part of is fraught with pain. Solitude defining astronomical spectrums, spectrums defining the worst of the world. Death in utter stillness. A long interval, marked by nothing of distinguished note. Ten years of you, marked by nothing of distinguished note.

24. I disagree with the critics, painful to admit. Colour should not make physical sense, it is all consuming, it is all you need.

25. I am reminded of our conversations about Goethe. How candles glittered and marble burned, out of one woman's pain came fantastical beauty.

26. This is not proxy; this is your life. The world is not rose tinted, it is doused in aqua. It may be born of tragedy; we will never know. I pray it is love, I hope you are formed of fragments of the sky and meadows of bluebells. It is a part of you.

27. You are meadows of bluebells, violets, and forget-me-nots

28. Fucking moved past the physical. It was good, I was complacent, all I needed was you. I can claim not to be lazy, but I don't think that is honest of me.

April: Three

I do not like lists, they bring too much order. They pinpoint every minute detail I am failing to keep up with.¹ Martha Rosler's, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, mirrors the pit of my stomach as I attempt to quell daily anxieties. It is jarring, abrupt and truly insular to a moment. For six minutes and nine seconds my eyes glaze over – I am her captive. My insides twisting, urging her to hurry, a petulant child learning her A B C's all over again. Wanting to know why a ladle? An eggbeater? Why no X Y Z?

May: Two

I do not like lists, but I have become obsessed with creating and recreating lists that my brain subconsciously crowds itself with. Over the last months I have sat on the tube, trying to think of things other than lists and recipes. The Victoria line screams at me as I scrawl my own iterations of *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, of what I deem essential to the kitchens I use. Never claiming my thoughts to be original or intuitive I sit amongst ideas that refuse to be creative. My alphabet becoming, again, repetitive filled with the assumption that, I too, could know what it means to be within the kitchen space and to subvert my role in the kitchen.

6 April: Child

Norah Ephron was my introduction to the powerhouse that is Julia Child.

I was eleven when I first watched her film, I have seen it maybe five times since.

Streep,

Adams,

and Tucci.

When I picture Julia Child, I see Donna from *Mamma Mia* and Madeline from *Death Becomes Her*. I don't see the ex-researcher for the American Government turned tv chef, or even the woman who would eventually monopolise the cookbook industry in America. I see her singing *The Winner Takes It All* wrapped in starched shirts and kitsch aprons, the lines of reality and fiction blurring. Streep and Tucci talking food whilst wrapped up in designer clothing in *The Devil Wears Prada*, Anne Hathaway hiding behind her desk.

¹ *an exception to the rule: shopping lists*

Julia Child, to me, was not a tv chef. Is not a tv chef. She is part of Meryl Streep; she is a fantasy. She is too big for the realities of life she is fantastical and ridiculous. She is stuck in film, stuck in the one clip of her making omelettes my friend Flo said I just had to watch. She is but a figment of my imagination, too entangled in other people's worlds to be real in mine.

12 April: My Grandparents' shelves

a

beeton

coyles, irene²

ducasse

escoffier

fearnley-whittingstall

guerard

hazan

i

jaffrey

karmel

little, belle³

monroe

n

ottolenghi

patten

q

ramsay

smith

t

u

v

weekly, women's

x

y

z

20 April: I AM

² *My granda's mother*

³ *My grandma's mother*

NOT MARTHA ROSLER.

NOT JULIA CHILD.

NOT MARGUERITE PATTEN.

my grandparent's bookshelves.
my mother's lasagne.
my inability to bake.
my unwillingness to eat omelettes (sorry Julia).
my love for dinner parties.
my grandma's lamb hotpot.
my dad's pasta sauce.
my obsession with fried egg sandwiches.
my collection of cookbooks.
my fairy castle 4th birthday cake.
my brothers' refusal to eat the same meal.
my Tupperware's of different ramen/ soup/ anything stock.
my love of refrigerator aisles in supermarkets.
my love of supermarkets.
my need to have hot/ chilli/ spiced sauces with everything.
my having a bad day tub of ben and jerry's.
my pre night out toast.
my gran's gingerbread cake.
my need to be the best.
my cluttered shopping basket when hungry.
the banana bread from my summer childcare.
the scrawling handwriting of a grandma I never met.
the staff food of every job I've ever had.
the beetroot eaten from the ground in my great granda's garden.
the inability to stay vegetarian.
the chaos of my kitchen cupboards.
the collections of nectar points.
the doner kebabs from my go-to post night out grill.
the cups of tea my mom used to make me before school.
the weekly brunch and scrabble game from my teenage years.

the hungover pints of water.

Insert: a lack of self-awareness.

I don't like eating right now, I don't like cooking right now.

25 April: abc

alphabet spaghetti