

WHEN FOOD TELLS STORIES

A TALE IN 12 COURSES

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Oana Capota | Frederick Cummings |

Margaret Dragu | Alan Hill | Sandeep Johal |

Kaitlin Kazmierowski | Lois Klassen |

Jackline Omondi | Lilia Yon

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Elisa Yon
New Westminster, BC
2017



Still Life w/ No Name, Elisa Yon, 2017

When Food Tells Stories: A Tale in 12 Courses

recipe – from the Latin verb recipere, to give and to receive.

The structure of a recipe is typically composed of three sections: an ingredient list, a set of instructions on how to prepare the dish and information on how to serve the dish. For this collection of recipes, I invited artists, poets and community members in New Westminster and Vancouver, B.C. to reimagine the recipe as a cultural text and as a vehicle to share a story and reflect on how food migrates, transforms, informs and transcends culture, identity, history and memory.

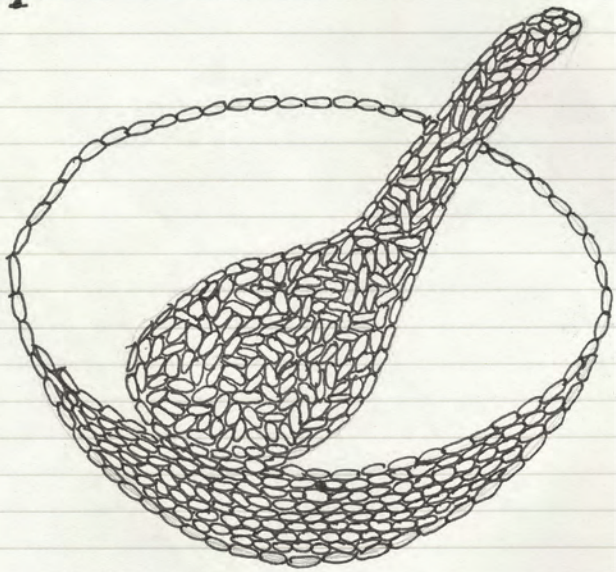
Artifacts, archival material and found objects from the New Westminster Museum and Archives and Salvation Army Thrift Store were used in the *Still Life w/ No Name* work to inform the place-specificity of the project as part of the City of New Westminster Artist-in-Residence Program at the Anvil Centre.

Each recipe card has a front and back, and is presented as a single course within an imaginary feast. To re-create this meal in real-time would be a way of re-telling these stories, rooted in multiple places and personal memories. The meal would become an immersive experience, sharing stories of human migration through reading, making, eating and tasting of the 12 course meal.

This work is dedicated to my family and all of the generous individuals who contributed to the making of this project: Oana Capota, Frederick Cummings, Margaret Dragu, Barry Dykes, Kristina Fiedrich, Alan Hill, Kaitlin Kazmierowski, Lois Klassen, Sandeep Johal, Kathryn Louro, Jackline Omondi and Biliانا Velkova

Elisa Yon

Jook
1:7



1st Course

Jook, aka Chinese Rice Porridge Soup

The ratio of rice, to chicken or pork bone broth is 1:7. Simmer for 2 hours or until your preferred consistency. Serve with thinly sliced ginger, green onions and roasted peanuts. Growing up in my mom's kitchen, we would eat this for lunch on a winter weekend, served with fried donuts my dad would buy from the Chinese bakery in Toronto's Chinatown.

V/S

Quack, aka Mother's Winter Breakfast Porridge

My mother called it Quack because of the Quaker Oats brand of oatmeal. She would add water, milk and lots of white sugar until it boiled. The consistency was similar to her jook. On a cold winter morning in Toronto it warmed me up and gave me a sugar rush before heading to school.



MIGRATION
LAW &
THE IMAGE

100%
organic
olive oil

orange
juice

Frederick
Cummings

2nd Course

Another
boring jam
and

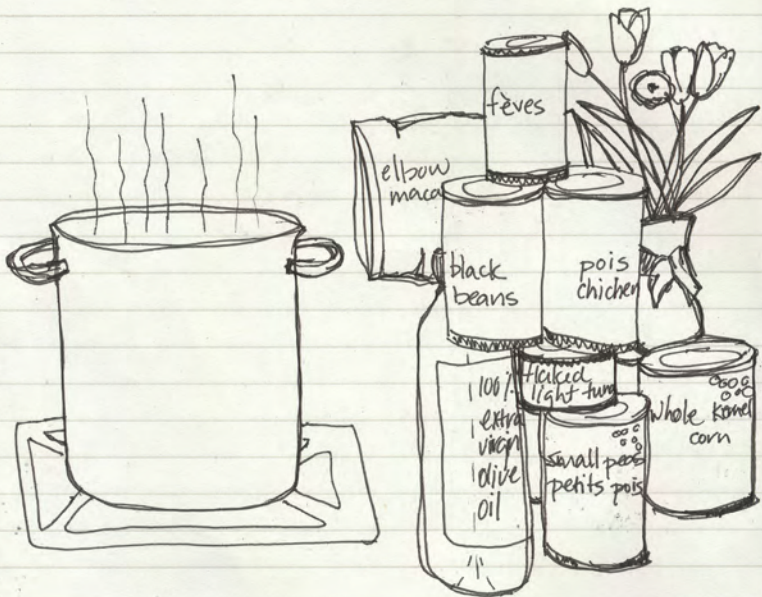
peanut
butter
for my
lunch in

elementary
school no
wonder

I stole the
yummy
German

meat buns
from my
arch
enemy

Frederick
Cummings



Lois Klassen

3rd Course

Kenyan Peanut Soup Recipe

1 medium onion | 3 thai red peppers | 2 medium tomatoes | 6cm piece of raw ginger | 1 whole garlic (7 cloves you can reduce to 4) | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil | 2 cups water | 1 cup peanut butter ("no name" brand, with salt, is best) | 1 cup water | 1lb mushrooms | 500g okra | $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt (add more to your taste) | Seasoning of choice (optional) | Canned or cooked beans/ Goat meat/ beef/ chicken/ dry fish (optional)

Method:

Blend the first 7 items using a blender or food processor. Pour into a pot and bring to boil. Cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes. In a separate pot mix peanut butter and 1 cup of water, stirring over medium heat for 4 minutes. When the fat starts to disintegrate in the peanut butter, add the first mixture. Continue stirring throughout the entire process to avoid burning. Reduce heat to medium/low heat and continue cooking for about 2 minutes. Add mushrooms, cook for about 2 minutes. Add Okra, cook for about 2 minutes. Add optional seasoning, beans or goat meat or beef or chicken or dry fish. Bring to a rapid boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer for 1 hour. The soup is cooked when oil from the peanut butter rises to the top. Serve with rice or ugali.

Jackline Omondi



Margaret
Dragu

4th Course

Margaret's Real Borscht

You ***MUST*** use beef stock, cabbage, beautiful beets, carrots, onions, garlic, a little potatoe and lots and lots of fresh dill.

Don't overcook it.

But – you can eat it hot or cold.

And you may add a dollup of sour cream.

OR

Margaret's Best Winter Soup

You ***MUST*** save all your chicken bones and vegetable scraps in the freezer for a few weeks then make a BROTH in the crockpot. Then sauté garlic and onions with finely cubed potatoes (more white than yam but you may use a little yam). Add lots of cracked pepper. Add broth and sauerkraut. Cook until the potatoes are very soft. Serve with good bread.

Good bread means home made bread . . .

5th Course

One of the customs my refugee family brought to Canada from Romania was the annual pig slaughter. Every December, before Saint Nicholas Day on the sixth, Romanians must have their pig butchered and transformed into sausages and other goodies. This meat is integral to holiday meals.

My father found out that farmers near Calgary had pigs for sale. He bought one, the farmer killed it, and my dad heaved it into the back of a truck. At home, my mother took over the butchery. Of course, we kids had to help out.

I liked the sausages and paté. The headcheese, however, horrified me. Somehow all the gross parts made it into the headcheese. Ears, skin, heart, liver, stomach. Then the whole thing was set in a jelly. The rule was that I had to eat whatever was put in the plate before me. I spent many

hours facing off the dreaded headcheese, refusing to eat it, sitting there smelling its awful odour, until I was finally excused.

Worse was the fear that friends would come over and witness my family's weird peasant habits. You know, that kids would discover our foreignness. It was bad enough I had to wear the Romanian national costume every first day of class, which was also class photo day. By December, I thought most kids would have forgotten that I was an outsider. No way was I going to blow my cover again over a pig in a giant tub in our kitchen.

After a couple of pig slaughters, my family succumbed to convenience. We began buying choice pig parts at the supermarket. No more nose-to-tail cuisine for us once we became regular Canadians.

Oana Capota
Museum Curator, City of New Westminster



Still Life w/ No Name Recipe:

From the kitchen of: _____

6th Course

Still Life w/ No Name

For the reader - please contribute your own course, story, poem, drawing or other contribution inspired by the ingredients listed below from *Still Life w/ No Name* or a creation of your own.

small peas

whole kernel corn

sweet gherkin pickles

100% extra virgin olive oil

frozen concentrated orange juice

flaked light tuna packed in water

elbow macaroni

spaghettini

oven-ready lasagna noodles

one-minute 100% whole grain oats

slow-cooked beans in tomato sauce

chick peas

black beans

sliced ripe olives

evaporated milk

tomato paste

smooth peanut butter

apricot halves in light syrup

peppermint herbal tea

plain tops soda crackers



7th Course

Margaret's Cabbage Rolls

There are strict rules to make cabbage rolls our way: you ***MUST*** use a combo of minced beef, pork & veal. You ***MUST*** add cooked white rice, but not too much rice. You ***MUST*** core and steam a whole head of cabbage and peel off each leaf when it is pliable. You ***MUST*** not overfill the rolls. You ***MUST*** cover with tomato sauce and then sauerkraut. Bake about an hour or so. You ***MUST*** include a lot of finely minced onion and garlic in both the filling and the tomato sauce.

I break or bend the rules a bit. I cook it in a crockpot and I use all kinds of minced meat OR substitute beans or add cheese or substitute swiss chard OR collard greens for the cabbage.

But I am allowed to break the rules a bit.



When I was little my auntie Lucie, who rarely cooked, was opening a can of mandarine oranges to make her terrible Jello salad. She managed to slice her finger so badly on the sharp edge of the can that she needed stitches and had permanent damage to her finger. Being a dentist, this also meant that she could not work for several weeks. A while after the injury, a certificate came in the mail. Someone had nominated her for kitchen klutz of the year and she had won! The framed certificate hung in her kitchen forever after... I think she also had an interview on CBC Radio. I do not know the exact recipe, but I imagine it would go like this:

Mix Jello according to package instructions. Open tinned fruits. Put in a bowl or jelly mold. Set in the fridge. Scoop and slop onto a plate. Watch faces fall.

8th Course

Halloumi Burgers

A recipe from Swedish friends. One thing I realized interpreting Swedish recipes for Canadians was that even though Canada claims to be a metric country, so many of our measurements are a mixture of both metric and empirical. Why do we describe the weather in Celsius but cook in Fahrenheit? My Swedish friend asked me this once.

250g of grated carrots

2 pieces halloumi, grated
chives

1 clove of garlic

2 eggs

2 Tbsp of flour

2 Tbsp of breadcrumbs

1 tsp of sambal oelek

Mix all and fry.

Kaitlin Kazmierowski



9th Course

My Sister's Canned Mushroom Soup Ragu Pasta

A favourite recipe from my older sister Lilia, who introduced our household to Western comfort foods that helped us survive the cold winters in Toronto.

1.5 lbs of ground beef or turkey | 2 onions | 7 cloves of garlic |
2lbs of fresh mushrooms | 2 small cans of Campbell's cream of
mushroom soup | 2 small bags of frozen peas & corn | 2 squares of
chicken or beef bouillon | 4 tbsp of olive oil | chilli flakes to taste



Saute onions & garlic. Remove. Saute meat until brown and smells good. Season w/ salt, pepper, chili flakes, bouillon cubes. Add mushrooms, corn and peas, 1 cup of water and two cans of soup. Stir and simmer for 20 minutes. Serve over your favourite pasta. We liked macaroni.



Lilia Yon

Marmite - A Recipe

Gently distress
a nation of drunken Englishmen until tender.

Marinate them in milky tea, sieve through
yesterday's tabloids
Queen Victoria's underpants.

Beat them until stiff on the spoon
eyes forward to the flag.

Cook at high pressure in barrack room
boarding school.

Grill in unisex misery
on a hot griddle of football stadia
skillet of reality TV.

Serve on bed of lightly tossed intolerance.

Bruise off the froth of an empire's
unpleasant aftertaste.

Continued on reverse . . .



10th Course

Season with a devilish dandruff of dry wit
a hint of detached stomach lining
a herbal poultice of perpetual booze.

To the English, Marmite is sex
bankers and lawyers
in unpronounceable suburbs
get naked, smothered
wrestle in its viscous black war paint,
woad of class, tribe, love

Shelve it somewhere visible, eye height
a sign, dark mask, curse, rune -
its mandala of the cool heart, cold glances
green fields of Albion, loved or loathed
no in-between.

Alan Hill
Poet Laureate, New Westminster, 2017



Chinese Tea Cakes

1 tbsp. Butter
1 tbsp. Lard
½ c. Soft Brown Sugar
½ tsp. Tea, liquid

1 tsp. Cinammon
¼ tsp. Vanilla
½ c. Pastry Flour

METHOD: Form into balls and on each put a piece of candied ginger.
Cook 10-15 minutes at 350° F.

From *The Happy Hostess Cookbook*, University Women's Club of New Westminster,
New Westminster Archives, 1938. Record ID: 30487.

11th Course

Mother

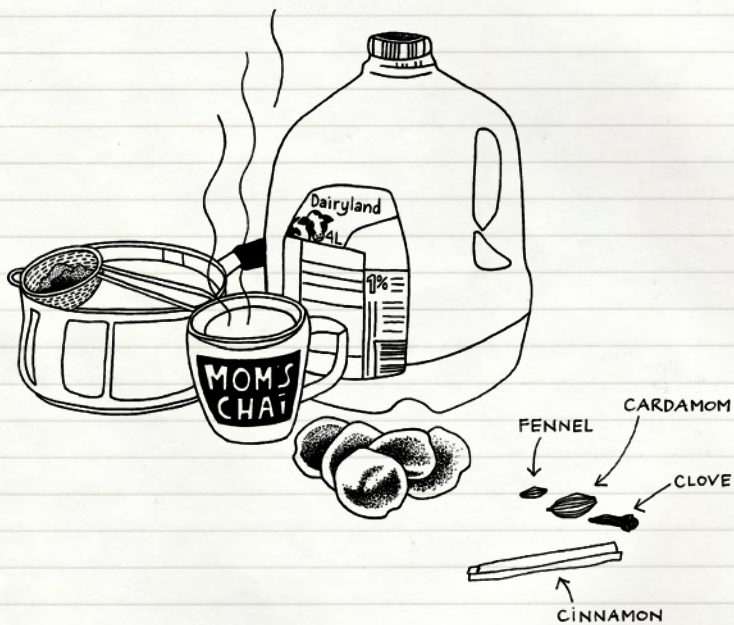
Sugary quack soup on a cold Toronto morning

Elbow those noodles on Saturday, noon,
before your piano practice sends you running, outside

His mother
no his sister
no no his family
named him this bean

Thank you mother for making the best gooey cheesy lasagna
a young boy could want

Exquisite Corpse Poem, Workshop No.2 on Mother's Day
(Frederick Cummings, Margaret Dragu, Lois Klassen, Elisa Yon)



12th Course

Mom's Chai

In the early days, my parents used to drive from Kelowna to Vancouver to pick up a 6 month to 1 year supply of “ethnic” items like spices.

Ingredients: 3 cups water | 1 cup whole milk / 2-3 black tea bags

* spices optional: Mix 1-2 tsp fennel, cardamom, cloves and cinnamon

* sugar, optional. Add as much or as little depending on how sweet you like it.

1. Add water to pot.
2. Add spices (if using) and bring water to a boil.
3. Add teabags, and bring water to a boil.
4. Add milk and sugar (if using), and bring milk to a boil.
5. When milk starts boiling, turn heat off.
6. Strain chai.
7. Put chai in a tea pot.

Serve chai with biscuits, cookies or samosas.

Mom's Chai is made with 100 percent love.

Sandeep Johal

READING

THE

MIGRATION

LIBRARY

2017

WHEN FOOD TELLS STORIES: A TALE IN 12 COURSES is a collection of recipes, stories, poems and drawings by workshop participants and others at New Westminster's Anvil Centre. The workshops and this publication were designed and facilitated by Elisa Yon (Vancouver, Canada).

Reading the Migration Library is a publication project by Vancouver based artist, Lois Klassen. It encourages public circulation of migration stories.

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