

THE FLAVOR OF HAPPINESS

“Steven, are you coming back for dinner. I prepared all kind of food. I am never going to eat it.”

“You didn’t have to do that.”

“I like to cook. I had some time. You can be my food taster.”

“That sounds fantastic.”

When I got back home, the dining room table was set, and there were all kind of items on the table. My mouth was watering. There was a roast salmon and some rice. Succulent rice served with saffron. And a variety of desserts.

I sat at the table and loaded up. There was food here for days. Alida had been working in the kitchen. But when she picked up a head of steam, she moved quickly.

She was teaching me about the liberating power of food. One bite and I would be transported to another world. These rare combinations revealed a deeper awareness. I was getting in touch with the life force. I tried to make sense of its effects. A little pepper and some butter under the heat of the frying pan offered the opportunity to transform any vegetable. I was discovering how the doors of perception could be swung open.

I had lived with the idea that food could be fortifying, but this meant so much more. I was learning the mystery behind these chemistries. The explosion of energy. The mapping of the senses. The revelation of life.

I would be eating one thing, and another flavor would reveal itself. I was getting lost in all this wonder. The sweetness that overflowed. The ripe delicacy. The total majesty. I was standing on the top of a cliff prepared to dive into the sea. Oh, the rush.

Garlic has a unique ability to transform. Its flavor would get me high. Mixed with some olive oil, I was in heaven. The crisp bite added so much to food. This was positively delectable.

There was this unique mix of heat and moisture which helped seal the taste. It wrapped the food in its own shell. It reinforce its freshness. These were the ancient elements of fire and water. The food drew from the minerals in the ground. It blessed the functions of the body.

Alida was discovering all this magic and more. She was recognizing a magic. This was the renewal of health. The baptism of the self. I felt myself slip under those waters. I was learning about the basic elements. I was discovering the combinations. I was adapting myself to the alchemy.

“Foods can be positively devious with us. You think that you are going in one direction, and you get turned completely around.”

I enjoyed being devilish. I was seeing something else. I was embracing the sun.

Taste this. It was a tomato, but it had been transformed into something else. The healing juice poured out. I sucked it all up.

Again the heat had taken the substance in another direction. I needed to explore this transformative power.

There was a mountains of sugar and flower. Through the valley wound a rivulet of butter fudge cream. The wild sweetness built to a crescendo. It sparkled through the mounds of plump raisins and thick walnuts.

Down deep in the ground, minerals clamored with their own jubilation. This dark energy

washed everywhere. It was a stream of warm lava that electrified the warm ground. This was the rich honey that brewed underground. It was the very heart of the earth.

This was a place of pure trouble. Chaos abounded. Cakes did not rise. Souffles fell. Dreams faded. It took an expert to ride the wave. Every mix can't be perfect. Some combinations courted tragedy. You had to learn how to junk what was there. You had to go back to the mixing bowl and start from scratch. There was too much liquid in the mix. The day was too humid. The gods of cooking just said no way! And that's how you had it.

You wanted to be invincible. You hoped to salvage the mess. It wasn't going to happen. It was the stuff of life. The force tearing things apart. That was why the garbage can was so wide. The risks were endless. And the hopes were endless. You would shake it up and begin at the start. You had no fear. You just needed to get it right. Then you could move on to something else."

You had to cook in bulk. You needed to prepare for the disaster. If you were good at your craft, you could pull that rabbit out of the hat. You could save yourself from disaster. And you could live your triumph.

There was only so much patience to go around. You would feel as if you were slapping yourself in the face.

I could only watch and imagine. I could even provide rescue, but I was only a spectator. I wanted to know the secret. I wanted to envision flour as this magical substance that I could form into a thousand shapes. It would look on the verge of a miracle. And the oven would destroy all hope.

It wasn't a matter of pulling it out before the heat took its toll. The price was already exacted. The loss was in the books. You couldn't shake it any other way.

You would end with a full garbage, and nothing to show for your troubles. You just looked ahead. You cracked an egg in a bowl and you were ready to place again.

Alida was valiant. She was a natural. She wouldn't let any of this phase her. She lived for the thin line of sugar that spread across the bowl. She could see the chemistry take life. She was igniting it all. When it finally took shape, she acted as if her intentions had simply ruled the day.

She hung tough. On a good day, she would be knocking it out. Deep in the wilderness, there was no rescue. Just a few treasures to show for hours of sacrifice. She whipped the flour together. She was moving time around. There was no limit to her skill.

This was the inevitable battle. She had the machines on her side. And she was fighting against the few demons who remained. On a tough day, it could still be an uphill climb. She would hold on with all her might.

This was not passion. This was grit. She was beating matter into shape. She was inventing her own language. So many sticks of butter. So many cups of flour. So much sheer vigor. The sifting and the rolling. The shaking out. The casting out of the last spirits which inhaled in the dough.

She knew how to hold tough. The rain shower had made it indoors. She could hold with her umbrella. She would weather the deluge. Hours later, there would be no traces of the bad day.

Sure some days invited a more insistent crunch. Crispness was not something subjective.

You could measure the snap. You could live for the explosiveness. You could embrace all the magnificence which often was just outside your grasp. The lesser cooks would skimp on freshness. They would concoct their confection in the lap. No wonder it seemed perfect every time. But the real test was in that heavenly aroma that lingered. There was something that you could always trust in Alida's art.

A good day was something else. You wouldn't know when to stop. The garbage can would be empty. And there seemed time for a million other possibilities. You were cooking for a rainy day, literally. And the heat was so perfect. It was an extension of your every other dream. The kitchen was warm with this fury. Nothing could interfere with the grand plan. Gourmets craved such inspiration. One flavor could be enough to set off everything else. Some nutmeg and lemon. Some peppermint and pecans. Where was all this going? It didn't hurt to get more aggressive. The hot oils spurred you on. You would roll it back with some butter. Then you would get into full gear with some egg whites and orange rinds. You were just beginning the lottery.

Alida had her own methods. It might start with a nod to Thai. Or a recipe for salmon from a well-known restaurant. These simple risks weren't enough. She needed to get more in depth.

What could make all of this perfect? Some cloves. A hint of mint. An artichoke. Why stop here?

She was twisting her cultural heritage. She was crossing the lines of demarcation. She was becoming someone unrecognizable to her former self. Hardly a radical, she was simply a playmaker. And the kitchen welcomed her multiple skills. All styles were spoken here. Some almond cookies would only take a few minutes. A meringue was second nature. All these tricks were second nature.

She would whip up the eggs. She would pull the lemon juice from the sky. The world was racing. Everything was bubbling. Salt here. Sugar here.

The assembly line got longer. Who was she feeding? She couldn't stop. How many hours were left in the day?

Her hands were moving at the speed of light. Things would congeal in mid-air. The magic would get tossed around in the sky. Manna would fall from heaven. The kitchen was abuzz with activity.

She couldn't let up. This was where failure could set in. There was nothing in her way. This was a day totally reliant on her magic. She needed to keep the spells going.

She would turn pages. She would seek remedies. The day took shape. She could focus, shake things up, reveal, overcome, dazzle, and recognize.

The story was not yet concluding. There were empty plates. Clean bowls. Extra ingredients. What hadn't been tried? Something cauliflower. A mixture of squash and cabbage. Something to last at lunch. A lovely soup. Homemade bread. Pastries. More cookies.

This would have to last. She was going to need a rest. She needed to put all this out of her head. She was not wedded to the kitchen.

"I need to make all this last."

What was she missing? What had not been tried? More rice. Some hummus. Some guacamole.

She poured herself some soda water. A rum cake. Things to think about for the future. The table was again full. The fridge was bursting.

It was never about the food. It was a matter of the knowing. The risks. The science. She needed to perfect the science. Then she had to let it all go. There were other pursuits. The kitchen could get confining. It was a nice day. She only got to catch the end of it.

She peeled off some cheddar to put on crackers. Some grapes. She wasn't going to eat what she made. That was the mark of a true artist. She wasn't feeding her own hunger. She was reading minds.

This was the deep level of the mine. The fuel was put on the small cars then ferried up the tracks. It was arduous work. Alida understood these principles. This was the real deep rock. It radiated so much energy.

This was where it got very dangerous.

If you descended lower, you entered this massive rock formation. As the over lit, it illuminated the underground grotto. This was the shrine to magnificent cookery. All the thick chunks of rock, like solid bites of cake rich with flavor. The whole space had a solemn feel. The baker had packed all the rocks together. They helped to support this wondrous architecture. The viewer worked to encompass this majesty. In the world of food, all this glory could be consumed, and this proved to be a greater testament to this achievement. There was something fierce in this realization. The wondrous idea that you could eat your way to enlightenment. Artist had painted such illustrious spaces. Primitives had watched in marvel and been inspired in their quests. This was the invitation which had appealed to the sacred in man. He could look at this space and understand something deep about his nature.

This was the source of complete liberation. The watcher could regard this space as a tribute to his own invention. He could measure his own beliefs against what he saw within. This was the temple. Within these noble walls everything was possible.

This was about more than tasting the appeals of salvation. This was a total experience. In these walls, the self could feel its transcendence. It was a memorial to all of experience. It maintained that every encounter with the senses could result in a greater glory. Through such a path, the individual could attain total awareness of the firmament. This was a space where someone could stretch out.

The ceiling was so high that it was a further tribute to the grandeur of the heavens. All the blessings rained down from above. The feast was endless. Once the participant started, there would be no end. Flavors would abound. Accompaniment would follow theme. The mass would overcome the self.

Deeper and deeper, more and more would be the drive to satisfaction. There was a purity in this encounter. It was not about indulgence. This was a mystical meal. The individual surpassed through contact. Each serving brought the celebrant closer to a higher purpose. This was an ambition which was sparked in the kitchen. And it became sustained in these deeper explorations. Taking in all this splendor meant absorbing all its benefits.

The cavern was an endless supper. Finally to complete this ritual, the acolyte became one with the space. Everything was drawn into the being. All the nourishment found its purpose. The self realized an eternity.

The eye traced every turn. The geometry became the knowledge of self. The

circumscribed space was a testimonial to this ultimate recognition. From simple porridge to extravagant delicacy, the panorama made its play. The tongue tasted. The mouth was filled, and the stomach was satisfied. This sustenance did not stop. Hand to mouth, mouth to stomach, stomach to heart. This was total gratification of a desire to feel at peace with the universe. All these hidden forces were releases. The reaction was initiated. The fire was set. The burn became more insistent. The spark was ignited. The explosion was detonated. The mass was caught up in the conflagration. The totality was about to go. A total conversion of form and substance. The food became pure energy. The self attained a transformation of the being. Such a lovely perfection.

In the humblest meal, there was always a remembrance of this shrine. The earth gave up its bounty for such an understanding. With fork in hand, the diner was part of something greater. Alida knew about this temple to nature. In every combination of spices, there was a complete awareness of the fundament of this alchemy. She held to these mysteries and offered them to those who were willing to learn the discipline.

You could peel back the next layer and arrive at something truly delectable. This was pure honey. This was more than fortifying. It was food to dream with.

The creamy sweet flavors melted in the mouth. A little bit of tartness would be superb. All the flavors would blend together. They would shake the spirit. They would reach deep in the core. The sublime would overcome all the other senses and send the individual on an endless journey. Oh the preciousness. The sweet lovely fruits of the earth yielding all their brilliance.

There was a genius to prolonging this experience. A little bit would be revealed at a time until even the heart was touched by final effect. The appetites would be tendered. The intent would be sanctified. The humors would be overjoyed. All this resolved in a complete surrender of the self to the ultimate flavor. All in forever!

It was an eternal dessert. The reward was always there and available. This was a unique intelligence. Even the blandest flavor sung with all the rejoice from the heavens. The harmony was universal. Maximum overdrive.

This sweet encounter offered wondrous repose. The spike of excitement was accompanied by a total calm. Everything negative was dissipated. The individual floated on a wave and was carried away. More, more, more.

In all its excellence, this honey could be concentrated in a few glimpses. It was the magic of life. It flowered in all directions. It captivated every aspect of the self.

The impression was angelic. The flavors captivated the self. The explosion spread out everywhere. Where was this taking you? The tingle exploded throughout the self. It swelled. It made the self insane.

I wanted to give myself to this high. It swelled all over me. It sent this wild friction everywhere. It shook me up and down. I did not think that food could be his soothing.

There was a theory. This was going to the source. How could all these varied impression be focused. It was an oversoul. The very inspiration that brought all these lovely juices flowing together in the perfect blend. I gave in completely.

There was a way of training the self to know. A taking away and a giving back. Breaking it all down to the simplest elements.

I started in nothingness. I enveloped myself with all this promise. I let it roll over me.

The pulse was eternal. It found its destination. I realized that there was this essence within me. My concentration focused this energy. It was more than a rush. It filled the gap. It leaped across the precipice. I imagined the high before it had even touched me. I was coasting on it.

A hint. A sum of all these hints. A swirling of all these motives. What was really going on? I was becoming surrounded by all these impressions. I was being twisted and turned by all these feelings.

It was so right. I could glide up and down. I could move in the gulf. I could let myself become overwhelmed by these basic powers. I was running ahead of myself. It was such mirth. I was doing everything that I could to catch up with myself. Everything that I wanted to know. Everything that I wanted to experience summed up in such a simple experience. I needed to understand the source.

It was the great elements that gave form to this kitchen conflict. Fire had its way of purifying everything. Too much and everything would go up in flames. How could this ultimate focus be attained? What was in the power of the flame that upheld the value of the kitchen

Fire had the power to put things in order. It could hold everything together in a really unique way. The power would just well up. It would consume everything in its wake. Such a unique power was remarkable. It was a flash fire capturing everything in its midst. This was the magic of its chemistry.

When such a connection has been so powerful, it took a great deal of heat to break things apart. The melting would be universal. It would allow new possibilities. There was this possibility of rebirth. New elements would be arrayed for future combination.

If the flame was hot enough, the reaction would take off on its own. The path would veer off on its own. All precedents could not contain the wonderful creation which was to come. It would be universal. It would draw from all these sources. But the fire would project it far beyond. Nothing could stop its effects.

In its most extreme, fire could transform. What was evident would be surpassed. Existence would reach a new state. Being would be surpassed. The coherent would become transparent. There would be such wonder in this lightness of matter.

Fire could take things that were soft and give them strength. It could harden the bonds. It could reinforce the connections. There was a marvel in the interlocking orders. The magical crystals. The penetrating intersections. Deeper and deeper burning.

The rock hard could be tempered by fire. The strict order could be broken asunder. There would be just enough effect to retain the form. Under a firm hand, it could be reshaped into something so unsurpassable.

Through the effect of the flame, a really deep stratum could be set off. This detonation could reveal a layer of sympathy. Within this uncovering, everything was possible. The vitality of the universe could extend upon itself. It could spread out. It could be a forever.

In the richness of the flame, the recognizable could be altered. What was evident was now obscured. The hope for revelation was now suspended behind a barrier. Nothing could tear this curtain. It would offer its desired protection.

The bubbling fires could propel an object to gain sufficient momentum to escape its restraints. Left to its own devices, all this spirit would enable the object finally to escape the influence of contrary forces. It could attain its realization.

The magic could swirl around until all these would finally be subdued. The world would stop dead in its tracks. The infernal motion would be permanently denied. The actual form of matter would emerge in a fixed architecture.

Fire would be the inspiration for true knowledge. This knowledge would have an eternity which could not be disputed. In its blessing, all previous existence would be put aside for a complete understanding.

The fire could burn from deep within the soul. With these influences, the soul would be in total turmoil. As these fires burned, the instability would take over the self. The madness would spread. This discomfort would have no end. It would be the new state of being. The self would gnaw against itself.

The fires were the welcoming power to ultimate transcendence. The heart would be purified. Intentions would be focused. Finally, the self could attain a certainty to confront all the disquiet, but which assailed it.

The fires were the sign of the final condemnation. Those condemned to this sentence could never overcome these effects. They would burn so deep into the self that the pressures would be without end. The individual could only hope for the end.

Welcome the effect of these elemental fires. And the air would only make them more powerful. In a strong wind, the wildfire would spread everywhere. The dry wild brush would catch. The fire would sweep everywhere. The conflagration would catch everywhere. Nothing would be untouched.

The fire was unruly. Fire spread everywhere. The wind could make that wildness more focused. It brought intention to the madness. It created a psychotic partnership.

When the fire could not keep up with the wind, the wind would peel away for a little mischief of its own. The wind was overpowering once it was released on its own. The whipping wind would shake everything in its midst. The world would twist and turn as the air established its dominion. Such an order would be without equal. The wild wind would seek its inheritance. It would claim its lost legacy. It would gobble up everything in its path. It would be relentless. It would gobble up everything in its wake. It was completely cruel.

The air may have promised total refreshment. Gentle winds fanned across the plains. Winds from the sea would relieve the heat. The gentle souls would find their beings in the light. They would be all air.

The air was clean in its intent. It allowed for no interference. It was absolute. It bore no limit. It spread out everywhere. It was the ultimate in freedom. It could blow hot. It could blow cold. It could explore every intention. Emotions were moved by its form.

Air was completely without gravity. It spread out so that it was completely rare. It made itself less and less. And in its hiddenness, it was able to work itself into every situation. It was an attitude. An atmosphere. A perfume. An incense. Something totally sacred.

This was the stuff of being. The sway of nothingness. It was what turned creation out as an even more tumultuous turn. The ups and downs of the gusts. The ins and outs of the currents. The kiss of frost. And the cruelty of a heat wave. All mixing together in a wild marriage that let go in the worst storm. It could twist the waters. It could shake the earth. It could spread the fire. It was a most destructive form.

It was the essence of life. The rival to the birds and the bees. It tossed seeds. It

pollinated flowers. It swirled the great forces of life in a clever blend. It gave life to the dead. It gave sustenance to the living, breathing souls.

It was how dead communicated to the living. In those deep, cold winds, the heart was pulled back and forth. In those strange chills the mysteries of the spirits were all revealed.

In the heart of these winds, was the electrical power which drove the universe. The wind power twisted on itself. It defined its own reality. It repeated against itself. It was all too much of itself. It repeated itself in and of itself. It renewed itself in its casting out. It was the explosive casting out of the devils. And the complete inhering of the spirit. The wind was a more expansive ritual. It stirred in itself.

The angels ride in on the west wind. And they separate the good from the bad, and the knowing from the ignorant. They bring their swift punishment with them. They freeze their opponents in deep ice. And they hurl their worse enemies in fire. Or they toss them in complete darkness. Without knowledge, and without air, they beg for their last breath. These angels use the winds in their favor. They are monsters with the elements. Better than any medieval doctors, they can work the alchemy in their favor.

It takes the truly resistant to play around with the mud to form it into shape. There humanity finds its origins. Once the angels breathe into these forms, life assumes its vitality for the rest of time.

In the earth, all the elements cohere. The great powers spread out throughout all creation. Man realizes his true nature in this fermentation. The nasty brew absorbs and energizes. It offers a primal sustenance. Thus, this strange wanderer is founded on alchemy's order. Intoxication is so much part of this regime. Creatures who toss their fate to the wind. The strange brew boils over night after night. And the besotted soul seeks some kind of permanent liberation. Lovely passenger on this turning rock. They embrace earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Always trying to escape themselves with their airy humors, they return back to their weighted existence. They scream for some kind of independence. But they become more and more entrapped in their muddy realities. They drown in their aspirations. They are rendered unconscious by their aspirations. Their dreams are their burial rites. Thus they end up being anchored in place. Even as they embrace their exile, they are only returning upon themselves. They run over themselves. They are too much for being.

Deep in the ground are the well-known forces. The lavas and the radioactivity. The forgotten heroes and the abandoned civilizations. Digging deeper in these catacombs are the ghosts who bring all this in order. Total denials of the angelic. These brutes are condemned to their dusty darkness. They inhale their mortality and this keeps them going in these contests. They lure others into this realm. They create their order and impose it on all comers.

Their hymns to the lifeless and their books of the dead are a piece with a life underground. They can do nothing to escape. They embrace this meager paradise and embrace the ugly shadows. They slip further down. They cough up the air. They choke on their fantasies. They are overcome by their visions. They are the pure humans. They do not take to the air. They have no angelic pretensions. They were made for this dusty fate. From ashes they find their origins and in the fluttering ashes they will find their resolution. The air gets more and more polluted. This is their preferred destiny. Their freakish forms and bewildered gait spells them as the true heirs to this scraggly kingdom. Let them feast where they plant their roots.

They envy the powers of the flowers. They resist being tossed by the storm. They claim what is theirs once and for all.

They feed their hunger on dirt farms and dust bowls. They season their lost hope with the salts of the earth. Their parched throats and black lungs are tribute to their resilience. They will not go down. They only descend into the depths.

They are on the top and on the bottom. They are meant to be everywhere. Goliaths of the sewers. Knights of the clay. Servants of the rocks. They shake the earth for its gold. Panning in the scrub, they find their treasures in closed eyes. The world becomes erased before their eyes. And in the ruins, they make their own way. They are not loyal to their history. They escape their enlightenment. They surrender to their toil. There is no reward offered them. They are planted in the ground. Not to grow. Not to rise again. Not to subsist. They somehow carry their legacy forward and are exactly where they were.

A massive energy wave runs through them. This is the power of the earth, and it is everywhere. They are magnetic even as they resisted their attractions. How could the earth be so resplendent and so arid. So given to affirmation and so lost in denial.

This was brilliant. The earth became submerged in itself. It surrendered to its pre-existence. It coughed up its people.

The Great Waters reclaimed all life. The crawling forms all came hopping back to the salty mix. Flying fish and slithering snakes all found peace in the brewing peaceful waters. Our origins went deep. We shook ourselves free from the ancient sea to assert our identity. We were surrounded by a constant mist. It kept us hydrated. The sprinkling followed in strict order. Then a relentless drizzle. Then a never-ending downpour. The Deluge was ready to make its play. It scooped everything up in its wake. The whole mass got puled along.

Suddenly, the whole world was under water. This was how it was always meant to be. Whatever has been taken out is being put back in. That wondrous balance was being reestablished until these beings would finally recognize that it was again time to step on solid ground.

The waters were purifying. They cleaned up all that had been sullied. There was deep action going on. The churning forces moved back and forth. This was a more lasting clean. All the stains are washed away. The waters pump all their energy back in the self. This was way beyond any other kind of refreshing. Deeper and wider and more consistent.

The waters could be debilitating. The steady balance could easily get disrupted. A bad cold turned into something life-threatening. There was a reverence before the seas. They had this store of memory. Our worst moments in the storm. All this returned through recollection. Back, back, back.

Reaching deep in the sensation was the only liberation. Baking on the shore. Drawing all the healing from those elemental waters. The electrical currents each finding their approach. The dangerous intersection of all these great rivers. Blood and nerve and air and immunity. Earth and fire and air and water. Are you healthy?

These great powers were ripping us asunder. The drowning. Always that cough. Too much water in the lungs. There was this need to cast off all disease. To reclaim the shore. The dry land. The receding waters.

The oceans inside. Humans lived through this contact. In the sea breeze all seemed to

connect. The tropical storms. The hurricanes. The lashing of the waters. Why was it moving towards this great encounter?

The waters knew something in their stirring. The great agitation of the planet. The ripple that became the magnificent wave. It was now time to ride. Deep within the pipe, the explorer makes her way. She is cast upward and outward. This is how each day is possible. This is the final betrothal of creation. Human and elements. The pushing forth into the sublime.

Alida knew all these recipes. And the water would slide in and out of the story. Something was holding all these stories together. Nothing such and nothing much turning into everything forever.

One bite, the smallest morsel concentrated all the feeling. The rush to finish it all. What is cooking? What is nearing a boil? Add potatoes. Add salt. Slice an onion. Pull out a tomato. There was way more power than imaginable. More welling up. Another great wave.

The kitchen was becoming too hot. The oven was going cold. The next step. A hotter flame. We were in it until the end. To capture this place. To make everything move from the imagination. The full house. The empty nest.

“Do you hear the rain hitting the roof?”

“Let’s hope that it doesn’t leak?”

“We need to avoid the flood?”

“Did you get all wet? You need some hot soup?”

What was the element that broke down all the other elements? Where was the natural super glue?

“I can put it back together?”

It was knowing how all the parts would interlock. And all the parts would liquify and bond together.

“This is a natural seal.”

“Is it love? What is the secret?”

The search for the sublime became more relentless.

“I need to find my spot. I need to stretch out.”

The true element!

In the making. It is all in the imagination.

“I do not want to break down.”

“You owe me more than you can know!”

What was given and what was taken.

“You take it apart, and put it back together. What is left over?”

“You have to squeeze harder.”

It was difficult trying to impart the lessons of food to the rest of the world. This was the key to the discipleship.

“Fuse it. Make it hotter! You need more butter. You need less flour.”

The crisp outer layer. You bite into heaven.

“You are getting the hang of it.”

“What am I doing? Am I eating, or am I cooking?”

“It can be one and the same!”

It was a paste. Was there too much moisture? What would happen in the oven?”

“This is where the art comes in.”

“You really are an artist.”

“This is simply surrendering to the elements?”

“Which element is this?”

“Steven, this is the mystery. There is not enough mystery in your life.”

“I am so hungry.”

“The crispness makes you want less.”

“I want something fresh.”

“The salad starts it off well. I am washing some hardy Romaine.”

“Sometimes simple is best.”

“Steven, you are learning well.”

“This is where the story begins.”

“Are you feeling well?”

“I am lost in space. I just need to sit.”

I filled myself with another feast. I felt that I was on the verge of a deeper understanding.

“Are you locked in?”

“I am discovering the true unity of the mind and the body.”

“Relaxation is important. You can’t work yourself too hard.”

“I am trying to learn your secret. How you turn all this into an art?”

“You have to move quickly. Even when life seems to slow you down, you find your own rhythm.”

“I am amazed. Truly amazed.”