

Counter Service.

Issue #12 - Guts



LETTER FROM THE (GUEST) EDITOR

I have always tried to steer away from spending too much time with cookbooks or at restaurants, studying the way other chefs engage with food. In actuality, when I am in a new place I would much rather spend time in the home of friends or, perhaps, convince someone to let me into their home so we can share a meal together. I think you learn more about a place that way. The domestic space: a home space off the beaten path. These are the food spaces I liken to the veins through which vitality flows through the body of a city. How are home-cooks thinking about ingredients? How do they vision 'family meal'? Why does agriculture—or any sort of cultural recognition matter to them? These people are at the core of some of my favorite food experiences. There is magic in humility and pragmatism and anyone who has ever had to provide a meal for a hungry family knows that that takes guts.

When I first came to New York, it was in pursuit of a degree in Visual Art. I was accepted into Cooper Union and it really shaped me into a different person as moving to a city often does. However, what remained the same was my commitment to inviting folks into my home to share meals with them. I realized through my cooking practice that being an artist was in fact about making not just any image, but a generous one, while simultaneously being held accountable for the images and ideas that we put out

into the world. What's more fascinating is everyone does this very thing regardless of whether or not you consider yourself creative. We are all constantly sharing our thoughts and ideas with each other despite which station in life we choose to occupy. Being the type of person who can make intentional decisions about how those thoughts, ideas, decisions, affect the lives of others—that takes guts. Guts is about risk: having foresight, looking beyond what our natural sight would normally allow.

Guts as a symbol for the inner us—specifically our stomachs—is fitting because what we feel in our core often dictates how we decide what actions to take—call it intuition. Sometimes it's just a tool that help us check in with ourselves, telling us where we are at with our meal or with something we saw that was unpleasant; it's a feeling we cannot shake. Josh and I reached out to the artists and writers featured here because they all have a distinct relationship to a vision about the world around them, be it through an experience with guts as an actual food product, the guts it takes to carve a space out for oneself in society, or how we communicate desire. Guts is a vital element to the magic of food and many lives everywhere.

—DeVonn Charles Francis



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Issue 12 - Guts

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We take submissions of any kind, really. Counter Service is a platform where we like to talk about what happens around the table and the edges of the food world. That doesn't mean you have to talk about food, but most likely it will come up in your submission at some point. We look for fiction, nonfiction, personal essays, poetry, playlists, photography, graphic design, vignettes, obsession pieces, illustration, and profiles of people/places/things/ingredients/etc.

Each issue does revolve around a central theme, but largely this theme is a guideline and not a rubric. If you feel so inspired to write/photograph/design something and it doesn't fit our theme, let us take a look anyways and we'll make it work some way or another. For examples, peep us on our website for the latest issue.

hello@counterservicemag.com

In this issue -

I AM OKAY	6
POOR MAN'S OYSTER	14
RIIS'17	16
THE BITTER INSIDE	34
TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF	36
YEAR BOOK COMPLIMENTS	40

I AM OKAY

Jeremy Gold

In April of 2015 I was particularly reactive to an anxiety about the future sparked by melting snow and a sense of the coming of an unknown something. Volatility as lightness, or a huge capacity for change.

I was nearing the end of a solid semester at The New School prolonged only by the daunting task of applying what I'd learned in Filmmaking Studio 1 to complete a final project about anything, 3-5 minutes in length with a semi-complex sound design. Those were the guidelines to follow. I decided I'd make a narrative portrait. I wandered around East Village most of the time keeping an eye out for subjects I'd found "interesting," which, at that time meant, whether I was conscious of it or not, anyone non-white. Dissociation in its most consequential form. I met Nashanti on the train platform, waiting for the 6.

We left the train station and walked to a park in the area where I took out the equipment I'd rented from school: a small shotgun mic and a Bolex film camera. I hadn't prepared any prompts or questions, so I said "tell me about yourself" after "and...action." Throughout our interview, Nashanti was intent on communicating hopefulness.

As a trans woman, she had moved to New York to live according to her own terms after having grown up in a rough, religious household that perpetuated fear of the judgment of her parents and their God. She expressed how her friends provided her with the support she needed to begin to develop comfort in her identity and body.

Nashanti had guts. Reflecting on that Spring, I see now that Nashanti created for herself a certain empowerment that I'd been looking for in inappropriate ways, perpetuating a division between myself and the "compelling" Other, the unknown. Nashanti's unknown was moving out, pursuing independence and liberation. She had no choice. My privilege was that I did, and I chose to elevate her voice, helping to communicate her message.

Now, Nashanti makes music and wants to help pioneer a path for other transgender people to succeed in the music industry. Her message remains positive in an otherwise discouraging and harmful climate. Nashanti's strength and resilience makes the unknown less scary and helps replace hostility with composure. Volatility as lightness, or a huge capacity for change.









WHAT A LOAD OF
TRIPE!

SERVED TO YOU FOR LUNCH AND DINNER
3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH



Phone us for a takeaway pot to eat in the privacy of your own home!
 If you wish to pre-book your Tripe & Onions then please phone
 Tuesday the day before or the Wednesday morning *Ph. 06 877 2999*



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POOR MAN'S OYSTER

Kelly Reid

My very first management - well officially anyway, not like when my bosses went away and I accidentally crashed their car doing the laundry - was at a French restaurant in a cool and hip area of Wellington, New Zealand. We served Kir's, we played French rap music (all 4 CDs), we served Horse until the source was questioned by the equivalent of the DOH, I devoured more `crème caramels than I've ever—to this day—eaten and served out of the smallest service bar in the history of 100 seater restaurants.

One afternoon I walked into work and the restaurant smelled just awful, this earthy barnyard funk. It was the Tripe. Even to my still learning foodie brain, what was more exotic than the pony steaks was this pale honeycomb wobble: poetically I would call it beef waffle - from a butchers perspective it is made from the muscle wall (the interior mucosal lining is removed) of only the first three chambers of a cow's stomach. Being something other than prime rib it was one of those cuts that the British lower class ate due to its inexpensive nature. But I imagine those fancy folks upstairs one day were like what in the world is that odor, gimme some of that and then suddenly it's the most expensive dish on the menu.

So, at pre-shift, we all had a taste and it tasted as dramatic as it smelled. I took the smallest bite and to this day the impression it made on me still has left it's mark. I did what I could to rid myself of the flavour by eating some expired marshmallows.

What was even more confusing was the fact that when we speacialed it, I was convinced that we had a dud on our hands and imagine my surprise when we actually sold out of it. I attributed it to our continental customers and that older set that had fond memories of Tripe and Onions in postwar times.

I wonder if (like any food you tried when your palette was still adjusting to new flavours) I tried it now, might I like it again? I've evolved past the time when I thought oysters were gross and coffee had to have three sugars to be drinkable. Like most things, neither had been prepared properly when I first tried them. Should I give it another go? Where does one find tripe these days? I'm well overdue for a trip to France, and maybe it's time to book a flight to see if 15 years of personal culinary advances have made it any better for me, or if—like my mothers dumplings—they'll leave me retching...



RIIS'17

photography & words by Jose Girona







Our safe haven, our home away from home.
A place we have created for ourselves, because no one has ever thought of us.
This is where I and so many of us have the guts to just be. A sense of community
that I never thought I could find.

Beautiful creatures so delicate yet tough enough to conquer any and all battles we have faced. This place shows us all that we are not alone. We are a community that has looked hate in the face and had the guts to stare right back into its eyes.





I love this place. I don't know where I'd be without this place. I now have the guts to love myself because of this place.
Brother and Sisters I love you all.







THE BITTER INSIDE

Alyssa Kondracki



Imagine you are seated at the dinner table. A bowl is placed in front of you. Steam billows off the brim. It's contents: oil-slicked broth over slivers of meat and various bite-sized bits of offal—partially submerged like pale grey and dark brown pebbles beneath a shallow riverbed. Ginger root wafts, pleasingly pungent. A puckered green finger chili floats on the surface of the broth, summoning you.

You lift spoon to mouth. You bite down on strips of sliced beef tenderloin, stomach lining that has been salted and boiled into tender submission, and a few toothsome morsels of innards (liver, heart, intestine, pancreas). The broth you sip is harmonious—an aromatic flavor bomb—generous with ginger and enough zing to cut through the richness. But hold on, there is a bitterness that grips you by your collar, and firmly picks you up with one hand. Just as you are about to brace yourself, toes reaching for solid ground, it gently places you down and mellows out.

What in the world just happened? What is this?

This is papaitan (pah-pah-EE-TAHN) a Filipino dish native to Ilocos (a region in Northern Luzon). Its name derived

from “pait” meaning “bitter”.

That unique and distinctive bitterness you detect is from bile. Yes, bile.

Chicken soup this is not, nor is it asking to be. You could tell just by looking. But to those that enjoy papaitan there is a certain comfort apparent as with all beloved traditional dishes. And like most provincial cuisine, its crowning virtue lies in the use of what is available and economical—the very definition of “top-to-tail” eating, where nothing is wasted. Traditionally, this dish is made with goat, but cow is also popular, and depending on who is in the kitchen there are a myriad of ways one can customize this dish to suit one's personal tastes (yes, there are alternative ways to recreate the bitterness using bitter melon gourd and leaves) just like any recipe that has been passed down through generations. But those that stick to the old school ways know that preparing this dish takes time. There is care involved as anyone who has skillfully made offal palatable will attest. Proving that the most challenging of ingredients (the ugly, off-cut, and cast-away) are often the ones you are meant to coax forward, sometimes from deep inside, until they sing beautifully and confidently in tune with the rest.



You smile too much she said / here hold this
a canon ball melon and the youngest octopus she could find
vacuum suckers / hungry mouths / she kept her boots on

This is serious business she said / naked
I told her I wanted her to leave / take it with you
she did not listen / smeared kiwi pulp into my hair

At least, I said, take your boots off
she wore an eel like a scarf / it was colder than just candles
It was colder than a lighter flame / it was cold

Take Your Boots Off

words by Charlotte Wührer

She had goosebumps like chicken skin / little vacuum suckers
the inverted belly buttons of hungry mouths
but she was stubborn / the eel was enough she said

and I confused tendrils of her hair
with octopus arms / they danced the same way / I said
If that's the game we are playing / with orange pulp

ground it into paste with saliva / painted
her toes with it / nails like plum skin
the inside of her open mouth / not smiling





Year Book Compliments

words & photography by Pedro Lopez

The term 'gay agenda' was coined after a satirical piece written in 1987, by Michael Swift title "Gay Revolutionary" was taken as truth. Looking at this text almost 30 years later, I am reminded of the history that precedes me. His words give me power in their comically sad nature, but stem from anger felt by a group of people who were cast aside, regarded as perversions in society. Swift's "essay is an outré, madness, a tragic cruel fantasy, an eruption of inner rage, on how the oppressed desperately dream of being the oppressor." This opening line was omitted when reprinted in the Congressional Record, causing many to believe Swift's essay as fact. I find Swift's words to be a modest proposal that informs people of the absurd beliefs about gays in the late 80's.





Counter Service.
Until next time, you smoke shows, you.