



prime cuts

by Amanda Chiado

Dusie Kollektiv #8





“I ate the mythology & dreamt
Of pies and cobbler, almost
Needful as forgiveness.”

from Blackberries

-Yusef Kumunyakaa

“People say I make strange choices,
but they're not strange for me. My
sickness is that I'm fascinated by
human behavior, by what's underneath
the surface, by the worlds inside
people.”

-Johnny Depp

APPEARANCES BY



All it took was Bill Murray, who brought the “Cake of the Gods,” he said. It was shaped like a rocket ship, elaborate flames ejecting from its base, navy fondant detail, American-the-Wicked stars crowning it in glory. It was prime. Danny was opening a bottle of ill-corked chardonnay when Bill Murray called out the catchphrase, “Right Kinda Laugh,” and smashed that space-cake beauty into the constellation of Danny’s nose. Everyone caught on to a raucous laughter, rattling all the cages of space, jamming up technological circuits.

Someone with an emotional crossfire, cried.

Anita, my dear friend held her very unique cake in her arms like a sweet-smelling, sleeping baby. It was an Austrian Sachertorte, full of dense apricot, and a smooth chocolate ganache icing. It improves when left for a day or two. Do not eat it fresh!

As everyone slammed their sweetnesses in Daniel’s face, Anita realized she had never seen a man smile so wide, so magically, which changed her indefinitely, and she leaned in for her turn to ruin her sophisticated cake, all in the name of generosity.

Smashcake Party

for Daniel Day-Lewis

“This meant cake. It was a sign.”

-Gertrude Stein

The Invitation Read:

It's all about the cake,

The luxurious cake.

Bring one to my birthday party

To smash in my face.

~Love, Danny

Whoopi Goldberg brings a kitty litter cake with little tootsie rolls lying on top. It reminds her of a hilarious bachelorette party cake in Atlanta where she met Julia Roberts. Sylvester Stallone brings a fruitcake, thinking that it is the cake that most closely resembles a fist. Sly and Danny once loved the same woman. The joy of forced graciousness.

Taylor Swift comes through his glass door with the epic apple pie, followed by the moon-faced Jay Leno who brings a million-layer cake with delicate balances of flaky crust and a mascarpone, Grand Marnier sugar-fluff, usually only served at baptisms. Everyone was dying for the slam. All the cakes sat like quiet children waiting for the gun of go. Hummingbird, Lava, Red Velvet. No one was sure if the smashing would be organized or spontaneous: when, where, how, how sweet?

Will Ferrel
James Brown
Michel Baryshnikov
Tom Cruise
Freddy Krueger
Martin Scorsese
Louis C.K.
Ozzy Osbourne
Tom Hanks
Gerald Ford
Ryan Gosling
Forest Whitaker
Tim Burton
Johnny Depp
Quentin Tarantino
Bill Murray

Apple Pie
Marilyn Monroe
Christopher Walken
Cyndi Lauper
Julia Roberts
Fabio
Daryl Hannah
Jessica Lange
Tina Fey
Taylor Swift
Whoopi Goldberg
God
Death
Amy Poehler
Cheeseburger
Anita

Tiramisu
Rod Stewart
Eggplant
Bergamot marmalade
Banana milkshake
Lollipop
Lemon
Twinkie
Chili dog
Brussels sprout
Chantrelle-mushroom
James Bond
Twinkie
Olive
Coffee
Natalie Wood

Julia Roberts
Patrick Swayze
Jimmy Fallon
Brie
Elizabeth Taylor
Michael Jackson
Madeleine
Prince
Spam
Virgin Mary
Disney
Oreo
Ootomom
Steven Spielberg
Charles Bukowski
Yusef Komunyakaa

Chex Mix
Jimmy Cricket
Kitty Litter Cake
Spaghetti
Tootsie Roll
Kate Winslet
Bruce Willis
Juicy Fruit
Sandra Bullock
Sylvester Stallone
Peter Griffin
Leonardo DiCaprio



Tuxedo Effect

Boys come down from heaven on a string.
James Franco loves to hear his father sing.
Tell me about the texture of the string. “It
wasn’t silk, but oh, so soft. It wasn’t rope, but
incredibly strong.” This is how God delivers
men. Slide through dimensions, fearlessly
dream. James sees this picture when he falls
asleep, after he eats his German chocolate
cake. Tomorrow, he’ll bury his dad in the
ground---who wasn’t silk, but oh so soft. He
wasn’t rope, but hung one long. James gets
up, slides on his tux, drives to the strip, and
blows kisses to the tricks. The lights of gods
create halos of gleam in this Vegas dream.
He stands in line for the Around the World
buffet. Tomorrow, he will bury, borrow, and
become his father, the one, but not today,
not today. The lobster’s crack, and bid their
soft bodies to James’ tongue. He chews and
swallows his way to forgiveness.

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Lemon-Kiss Metamorphosis

“Why do you have a sword?” Fabio asked me. “For dragons.” We looked down from the bridge. The rails were witches fingers. I was in the gray, straddling unknown ground and my purse was full of lemons. He was looking away so I tried to bring him home. Desire has a flavor. “If James Brown had his way, goodness would be magic.” I wasn’t sure what happened to those clever words I threw at him, since he never turned toward me. So, I was on my own. Shadows grow quicker than weeds. With flight in mind I threw my purse, took my jacket off, and started to climb up the short guardrail. The lemons, Eureka lemons rolled out from my purse and into the street.

Where the Fuck is My Light?

“Ensure that your life is in flux.”

Jenny Holzer

Louis C.K.'s most recent eye exam proved that he'd begun growing a small Indian eggplant behind his left eye. He didn't need a new prescription, so that was the good news. The bruise of the vegetable was pushing against his ocular nerve at a steady growth rate, which felt like a tiny heartbeat. It wasn't as painful as one might expect. He'd only realized something was amiss because instead of seeing people's faces when he looked at them, he'd see bursts of colorful fireworks sitting on their shoulders.

When Ozzy Osbourne is your optometrist, even the strangest diagnosis feels like a guitar riff. “I wake up a new person every day,” Ozzy says. Ozzy quickly alleviates Louis's discomfort.

Following his visit the sounds of the stretching fill Louis's brain. People were not people, but giant orbs of candied fire-light. All that seeing before, wasn't seeing at all. His little secret, his little purple dream that made him giggle, was bringing him a new found hope in life.

He laughed through the grocery store, following perfectly good strangers to watch their lights burn, all their pastels shimmering. No one had the guts to question his odd lingering, but the pregnant woman in the veggie aisle sensed his gaze, and suddenly, tossed a ripe cantaloupe at his head, dislodging the dream Louis had been growing.

In the ambulance, they thought he wanted a cigarette because he just kept yelling, ***“Where the fuck is my light?”***



Jimmy Fallon is Perfect.

Jimmy Fallon's beard is full of army men. He is protesting with his face. The war on beauty is hard work that involves lots of Kit-Kats, Wheel of Fortune and granola earthiness. You know “not trying” like Bukowski said. Jimmy Fallon is not trying. He is that pine tree air freshener swinging on Bundy's rearview mirror. He is edgy, marketing that makes me feel- so cool. Jimmy once dressed up like Jiminy Cricket on a random Tuesday and he hopped everywhere in some Kafka experiment of self. Yes, he did it with his giant beard. The longer he did it, the more he believed it. The longer he did it, the more he believed in it. His beard was its own entity. “Hey, Fallon,” his doughnut man pointed, “You think you'll move in some swallows into that beard this fall? You're not Peter Griffin you know!”

Jimmy liked the attention, so the people's rocks were more like marshmallows. He liked the idea though, his beard on a windy day becoming some soft protection for a small, feathered family instead of his current army of soldiers, not to mention the crumbling of Oreos and Chex mix. The season was changing and he had to make a move. The fall gathers and grows roots. Spring is a time to fly. Jimmy's beard proves yet another accomplishment, and sometimes when he is alone, it's the only accessory he wears.

His last Tarot reading ended like this. “May the season trailing away be your old ideas that don't live here anymore.”

Love and a Peep Show

“It’s ridiculous what I do.
I can’t believe in it-but I have to.”
“I like bad jokes.”

-Damien Hirst

We find Bruce Willis in the bathroom of my brother’s newly renovated sex shop after Rod Stewart gave a surprise performance of Tonight’s the Night.

We feel bad pick-pocketing a dead man, but his Juicy Fruit is a testament to his fleeting boyhood and his coins have their sad good luck, and hey, the change could still do a little clink-clank for a peep show.

Ghosts and blow up dolls shake their heads, feeling like sweet mercy, a want of wholeness lingers in the lost & found.

We wrap him in gauze. Someone, everyone thinks of Jesus, but with a more honest, rugged beauty.

The naked girl has a gun behind her back. The artist cannot stop imagining the bullet, the silver paint glistens like sweaty bobs. Two meatheads carry out the softly swaddled Die Hard man. Every babe shivers in their spandex mortality.

“Love dies a thousand little deaths,” Bruce says to me. He kisses me on the lips in the ambulance.

They speed off with my firecracker, cherry lights like little winking hearts bursting in the darkness.

Ever since, the alter has existed in Bruce’s name bringing in implausibilities of people to worship a love stain on the concrete of that candied sex castle. Bruce knows that any death, real or not, makes people believe in life again.



Hunger

“He had been hearing voices
commanding him to jump.”

*Kevin Hines’ mother,
Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Survivor*

The bridge creaks like a guess. I synchronize my sway to his. His leverage against the earth, gravitational defiance. He knows the shift of water, weight of my body charged with hunger. A thousand steel arms undress me, refract into windows, flickering years. Let’s grow old in the pattern of sunset and sunrise. Our vicinity is everything, your nearness my savior. Bridges are the closest thing to romance for the lonely. Marilyn Monroe had long bridges in her eyes, tender to a fault. When people jump from your shining grate, I understand their desire to make memory, to connect deeply to something, experience being taken, even if it is cold, even if it is steel.



Outage in Brussels

Haymish says that Forest Whitaker has one normal eye and one giant eye. I say that he has one tiny eye and one normal eye. Meanwhile, the blind guy tunes the piano. "It's all about seeing," I say. He touches the lightbulb and then says, "Look at this, but whisper darkness." We pass the eyeball shaped Brussels sprouts. After some clanking of the piano, we hear the neighbors arguing. There are many ordinary moments during a season of magic. She did this and he did that. The sounds of their voices are a damn, big-light dimming. The power fails, our forks clang and the piano is a sleeping baby. The man who was arguing next door yells out,

"Big or small, I never understood the universe anyway."



X is the Ghost

Christopher Walken is dancing with Daryl Hanna when he starts thinking about the sea, the Mediterranean, sharp blue with gray rocks, and Natalie Wood and the deep, dark plummy water it becomes at night. The weight and color of wine are much like dancing, so says Christopher's blood.

Daryl's body can feel his thoughts of oceans. "You are *all* you play," he says. Her body starts to turn iridescently scaled reaching a state of ocean dampness. It makes him sing; first whistle, and then sing an old lullaby his father sang, "The ocean cannot take the boy, the boy cannot take the sea, but the girl can keep the boy and the boy can let it be."

It soothed him to hold her and he thought about Natalie Wood again, the similarity between rocky road and rocuroonium. The psychic man he played once would think this moment was life-shifting. He called on some formula, but the X was the luck, the X was the ghost.



Kingly Bowls of Spaghetti

Preparing for the role of his life meant giving up. Quentin Tarantino, a novice meditation expert, had convinced Johnny Depp that he could actually erase himself from himself.

“Just forget” he told Johnny, “F-o-r-g-e-t yourself. I like to do it in the morning since coffee cures the night, HA! Foldgers creates a new beginning! They should market that!” Tarantino was infamous for one-sided conversations.

He could have gone on, but it didn’t change Johnny’s problem. He was hungry. The internet’s crush on him felt like a real series of wires, flashes, means of transfer signals, lights controlled-obtuse meaning, heat, and electricity. This was quite hard to forget. This made him hungrier.

All night, he tossed and rolled through time, deep in darkness’s warmth trying to forget himself. Upon his exhausted awakening to the first day of shooting for Tarantino’s movie: *Kingly Bowls of Spaghetti*, he felt like a fresh grave.

The song dropped into Johnny’s head. “The best part of waking up...” is having a job where you are paid to temporarily forget you are Johnny Depp.

Tim Burton has a different method, forget who everyone else is. Connections are built upon these kinds of sentences.

These challenges in the theories of approach send Johnny to church, his pendulum of self a big lollipop that we all keep licking.



Time for Scorsese

Scorsese gives everything away. “What a lovely watch,” I say. “Oh yeah, take it!” The sunset rusts and the water relaxes all over the rocky shore outside the window of the restaurant. I need him to tell me about *Goodfellas*, about long narratives lost in time. “DiCaprio, you know” he says, “became an actor, because of all people, his dentist, after an extraction mind you, gave him a Sam Shepard book.” He laughs. “Something out, something in!”

I see my father in him. That is why I want him to keep talking about anything detailed and drawn out. Every time, I ask him to tell me, again, about saving that fawn in the hills of Lake Tahoe. We enjoy an antipasto, fight over the last kalamata, the Chianti is too expensive, but I drink it anyway.

We feel like we were floating on the Pacific, against the idea of the roundness inherent to the globe, keeping the idea inside of us that, things, life, us, dinner— end.

Little boats go boldly into the darkness. He hands me his watch, “Giving things away,” he says, “makes me worry a little less about loss.” I wrap the salt shaker in my crisp white napkin and shove it in my clutch. “That blouse suits you. Red is not a lost color,” he says and winks. I unbutton the chiffon thing and stuff it into his jacket pocket, like a reckless rose. I say, “Now, you look like James Bond.”



1982

Jessica Lange & Baryshnikov Divorce

*After Baryshnikov's ballet to Frank
Sinatra's That's Life*

Her tulle dress is an explosion of their disease in the light. A man hammers at the keys from the studio in the back room. It's over. There is cool grass outside and a man behind the camera in a first memory. "Don't worry Jessica," he said, "you won't get what you want." All sweet sounds deserve consideration. Women are gifted at dipping their fingers into darkness, and allowing the mirror to pour out, waterfalls of puppet strings. Baryshnikov can manage a Twinkie and a pirouette while Jessica gazes out the window in search of that first memory. With every turn he enters the ballet of Giselle, trembling with lies and ghosts. How cool was the grass? She wants to know the dance, so she slams out the door to chase the red balloon, the beginning of knowing. He sees her always as she sees herself, a double exposure. The dance of light and dark is whip cream. The lock is broken on the door, and hope is the last and only security.



Peaches

"I'm trying to shut up and let my angels speak to me and tell me what I'm supposed to do."

-Patrick Swayze

A mamba, a samba, a rumba, his mother's arms. Patrick Swayze always escapes, he dances his way out. There is ever a way to negotiate a new beginning. He has untangled what you have no time for.

"Patrick is another kind of hero," my father says. "A man with exceptional timing- the where and what, and how to." Swayze is often compared to Science, both mistaken for God.

My brothers can dance like a movie stars—our blood is made of glitter. When Patrick does the cha-cha he always mouths, "Thanks, Mom and Dad."

Patrick knows all of this, because he is a chef, a man of miracles. I wrote him in 1987 and told him so. He is the joker who knows his deck of cards.

Swayze is the name of Kate Winslet's lavender Cadillac. The pinstripe that splits the hood in half is extremely delicate, like the consequence of a body, a soft, summer peach.



Eat.Fey.Yum.

Tina Fey knows the secret language of bodies and her tongue tells her that her 28th child will crave burritos.

Octomom set a standard from which any truly comedic woman must ascend. “This isn’t anything like dying,” Tina says, “I mean zombies are over, but giving life-- totally in!” Everything out of a woman’s mouth has something to do with the Virgin Mary.

Tina’s keeps some and gives some away according to a specialized, undisclosed number system. She isn’t steadfast to any ideology, but instead senses and then acts, much like a fetus. Tina, and her partner in perpetual conception and ascension, Amy Poehler, have a golden list of names they will gift to the world.

“The children take her body,” Amy says to me, “but consumption is never one sided.” I agree. “Neither is a cheeseburger.” I laugh because soon Tina will pop out baby Disney, a name chosen for its securely-sweet miniature nature.

For brief moments in her adult life, Tina’s body will be empty until once again it is elevated to its highest good. Giving birth produces the loudest type of laughter, the kind that laughs you all the way home.



Road Kill and Banana Shakes

The baby is squirming in my body telling me I need another banana milkshake. I want to slow down to gather the dead with my black smudged eyes, but I miss the cue. I am not lost enough to stop.

The baby, the boy is everything breakable, the lens through which I see ultimate beauty, the darkest tombs.

Life is mostly about sucking down the sugar, looking away from the family of raccoons squished on the roadside. Nonna says, “Oh Dio, a cat.” I drink deeply and wish, just not to be able to see, never to set my unborn baby free, to avoid disaster all together.

It was just us singing, loudly then, Cyndi Lauper’s Time after Time trying our voices at heartache— right before one raccoon told the other, *Come on, follow me.*



Brokenhearted Ostrich

When the insults start to stir at the town fountain on those deceptively spring days, someone, specifically, Tom Cruise says something bomb-worthy. He's just one of those guys that like to get people excited, advising the town's suspected homicidal maniac, "You should always dig a grave with your legs bare, you know, to feel the cool of the earth breathe against you."

Warm weather does this to people, especially lovers; it moves people to swallow.

Prince calls him, "A stupid ostrich." He imagines him with Elizabethan hair and a big ass. The insults shrink him to the size of a Jelly-Belly. The heart of the ostrich is larger than its brain and that is what makes it a comparative delicacy.



Ashley River

You're barely mine, Sandra Bullock. After Ryan Gosling turned his back on you, you can only be reborn through boot-camps of love-making and rigorous tenderness. If I didn't have the cold-steel commitment my father hammered into me, one steak dinner at a time, I would have just sent you into a dark field in search of the god in goodness.

You say to me, after three bowls of Phish Food ice cream, "It feels like a Spielberg movie playing in my heart." You're sobbing, "little toy soldiers burning up love-bombs, illuminating his god-like face." I roll my eyes, but not in your presence, in the bathroom mirror after I swallow a little pill.

Ryan, if you are listening: After your done preparing for another role by building a kitchen table, restoring a 1973 Chevy Malibu, and rowing down the Ashley River (where someone found a dead girl, a pretty one, a blonde)— can you please kill all the magic in your hands? I am done with your card tricks, and golden coins behind the ear, and I don't want to collect Dick Tracy toys because Sandra wants me to be a glorified you.

You left me a crime scene. She is the artist and you are the chains. She keeps hearing you trying to escape her body.

Do it already.



Rescue Dog

Will Ferrell makes a chili dog with a can of Hormel, and Spam instead of a hot dog. He imagines himself as Tom Hanks from *Cast Away* and speaks to his dinner. “Looks aren’t everything,” he blubbers with his mouth full. He’d just skydived the day before and now he thought of everything in terms of distance to the ground.

The parachute was his mother’s eyes for a million scrap-fabric reasons, another false rescue. Now, he’d let the chili dog save him and tomorrow Starbucks would dig him up from being buried alive.

That velvet Jesus piggy bank was staring at him from atop the television, telling him, *Remember, your mother had an affair with Gerald Ford. Remember how silly you thought it was that Gerald Ford yells Touchdown for the USA when he climaxes.* Your mother, she lived.

He was a succession of near misses, bullet flavored good-bye kisses. Will ate his Spamchilidog in the La-Z-Boy, and his real dog, Phrank, begged for some saving too. Will must live and he would start with the consumption of three days’ worth of salt. The glowing haze of the news unraveled its newest, delicious disaster.



Michael and Elizabeth

“They pronounced me dead,” Elizabeth said. Then, Michael poured champagne, the diamond of alcohol, into porcelain cups drawn up with violets. He served me soft madeleines and we sat at the small table, cramped legged, remembering youth’s closeness to the ground. A woman’s body, a child’s emotions.

We ate buttery death over a tiny tea set. I always wanted him to serve fortune cookies, but he was shaken by little paper prophecies. We’d laugh about irrational fears, and Michael would slap my knee, “Good luck dying.” I’d sleep in his bed and we’d sing lullabies to each other, pillow fight until winter, winter that seeps in, a bad brie through a hungry vein.



Chanterelle-Kill

My step-father is Freddy Krueger. Every Christmas my mother surprises him with another striped knit for killing. He usually wears them while he is arranging floral in the enclosed porch. His obsession for flowers, specifically lilies began after he starred in the first Nightmare on Elm Street film.

“The fire of death and the flowers of life,” he says. “It’s always a balancing act.” He looks out into the hungry horizon like something had just been found, broken.

He leaves before sunrise on Sunday mornings with the town arsonist to pluck chanterelles for a rich heiress in town no one believes exists. She pays top dollar for the little caps and in the cold of the muggy, wet morning, my mother sends our Freddy into the swampy hills, where people, other people, hide bodies.

Freddy’s little sack lunch has a heart drawn on it. Bodies want something real that lasts forever.

Freddy has that particular way of saying good-bye, an aching, long look, like he is never going to see you again.



Kanye Quest

The absence of night brings ghosts through the mirrors at midnight; portals for improvisational musicians, and jazz pianists with reckless hands.

Kanye’s piano is his body of intimacy and sweet alcohol a communicative friend. The dead always speak of what is missing. “Where is that bergamot marmalade I bought in Port Townsend?” His dead mother files her nails in the chaise, shakes her head like a hula girl, and preaches about the guiding lights.

I too, am lead by the dead.

He takes it all down because he wants to quell their desires for good now. When he ultimately sleeps, he wears his little golden crown, wants so much to believe in the protection inherent in attachments.

Once the light shifts into morning, he thankfully feels the aliveness of his skin, senses that the dead have quietly melted back into his mirrors.

This particular morning he woke with a feeling of calm. He had a written a song the night before about steering a boat. His bunny Diamond, a New Zealand white was giving birth to eleven kits. Their immediate blindness was a softness from which his heart could never return.