



*Forest Fire Creme Brulee*

A forest fire leaves spreads the scent of ash and pine and flower petals on the ground. Did a bride explode?

*Grape cake*

A piece of plain, handmade paper is inserted into a bright, assertive frame. The paper has dried fruit and crushed petals, freshening the room with a plummy scent.

*Sticky Rice*

Two mice sit on a plate, stems askew. Skinning them, tearing out their insides, isn't as violent as it sounds, delightful even.

*Spring Floating Island*

I'm not sure how I got here. It's chilly, but the sun warms my skin enough. There are bits of grass and weeds piercing blotches of mostly melted snow. This is a young island, but not the kind made by tectonic violence. Clearly this placid sea receded around it not so long ago. I miss my family. But at least I have the activities of survival occupy my mind. In the morning I milk a goat that wanders around freely. Sometimes I have to chase the goat to get the milk, (I haven't made rope yet), often a few leaves get in the milk but it already tastes like dandelions and grass. Tangy, it's a little tangy. Chickens, bees, flowers, grass, goats, so tender, so young.

*Summer Floating Island*

I just woke up. It's hot. I seem to be on a small island covered with vegetation, and grapevines everywhere attaching trees and ground into one knot. WTF! The water is covered with some thick layer of green weed."

*Fall Floating Island*

I'm on an island at night--red, cracked dirt and an ambiguous, withdrawn sea. It's more quiet than I would ever expect, as if I were floating on an asteroid. I don't know what happened, I can't see any

wreckage. It smells like something lives here. It's quiet and remote, except for a living smell.

*Winter Floating Island*

I woke up on a small island. I don't remember how I got here. It's cold. The smell of fat is in the air. There's some sweetness somewhere. Where is it? I test the ice circling the island. It seems firm. Can I trust it? It's not far to the other side. I run over the ice towards the fat.

*Winterr Island (black walnut)*

Oh, my bed is now hovering over the surface of a gentle island, covered with snow. There's a calm city not far away, I think, doors closed for warmth. I can go back to sleep safely."

*Chestnut*

If the body is a lumbering bag of water, and it's always being moderated lest it dry out or floor, it's hard to know in advance what climbing under a mountain of sugar or salt could do to a person.

*Chestnut*

Chestnuts are hard to peel. We thought to peel them and then roast them in a crackable shell, seasoning the chestnuts at the same time. But salt crusts pull water out of the nut, leading to an inferior roast.

*Blue cake*

It's not made of ground butterfly wings but it might as well be.

*Carmel Cantaloupe Cake*

Alliteration always acts, according to an ancient algebraic algorithm, as an augmentation to aromatic amalgams.

*Celery Cake*

A pale sheet of green paper, held up to a fogged window and the rising sun, before anyone else is awake.

*Rye cake*

Dear Henry,

A whiff of fresh bread is in the air but I'm eating cake and I am happy. Come home soon.

N

*Truffle cake*

Hidden within this gray tree, an infinite number of tiny earthquakes

*White pine cake*

Lost in the wilderness, smoke signals somehow.

*Corn Cake*

Betty crocker would love it.

*Poolwater*

Like sipping at the bottom of a pool. More like sipping at the bottom of a pool than it would be to draw a drought up from the depths.

*Rice Mochi*

An analysis of globalism in 2016 comparing the marketing and availability of various rice crops in the midwestern United States. Preliminary observations are extended based on the inclusion of factors such as subtle abstractions and preferences around taste, mouth-feel and poetic connotation.

*Molten Sunflower Cake*

Surprisingly the sun tastes of earth.

*Sumock Mitten*

A dinosaur extends its palm to offer a warm brown snowball that contains an unplaceable hint.

It rains sometimes, and somehow enough sunlight makes it over the walls that plants grow assertively throughout the property. It never snows, and we can never really tell what season we are in. The days don't seem to grow longer or shorter according to any consistent logic. After a few days it becomes easy to forget there is anything beyond the walls.

The house is always under a shade cloth and the walls are covered with plants, so we don't even know what they're made of and we stop using the word "wall" when stretching up to pick an orchid out of them.

Interrupting the wild growth, a pale green rectangle hangs on the wall, a shelf in the shape of a frame. Inside it, flowers cut from the grounds sit in expressive glass cups from Finland.

The house has only the largest overstuffed chairs. The type out of fashion everywhere because of their gross comfort. Nonetheless they are attractive. Exactly the color of the stone floor, or it's average between wet and dry, they are a medium blue gray. It is as if the floor has developed soft places, like drywall sometimes takes in damp and becomes pulpy, the chairs are overstuffed mounds, that nonetheless, manage to totally support our bodies. The couches are made from a special moisture wicking fabric, so the damp, humid air never feels sticky but always comfortable. They are so large, they serve as beds and we sleep in nooks off the kitchen, magnetically attracted to the hearth of the home.

There are many chairs, we fall asleep all over the house, just as we read all over, choosing a chair for the light and time of day as much as for a beautiful corner of ceiling that we stare upon daydreaming while the book falls to the floor into a stream of water.

The beginning and end of days mean nothing to us, the only unit of time here is the 45 minutes it takes for the creme brûlée to bake or the 55 minutes of this next cake experiment, and the 2 hours it cool on the slate counter before we can see the result. Is it deep enough? Or is it too deep? Is the rye too strong? Maybe we should decrease it to a  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a cup with 1 cup of flour as opposed to  $\frac{2}{3}$  and  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Or are the berries the problem? Are they not bright enough? Perhaps the next one should include red wine and pomegranate molasses? We look up, the shelves in the pantry are dim, we've been sitting here for hours. How long? There are no windows only shelves of ingredients and two jasmine plants on the small table between us. One night blooming, and one day blooming jasmine, the white blossoms both called jasmin. Every room in the house has a pair sitting somewhere, on a counter, as a table garden, on a stair or beside a bath, and growing outside and up the walls. It could be day or night, the jasmine is always in bloom. We return to our discussion of cake.

Springggg House is an autonomous unit. There is a courtyard inside with a pool filled by a natural cold spring. The house is an island because it is surrounded by high walls which bear no door; it is unclear what surrounds them. Maybe the wall is keeping out the sea. Maybe it's blocking out Mediterranean countryside. Maybe we're in some desolate valley of strip malls in Southern California on the way to somewhere beautiful. We don't know. There's a mystery surrounding peaceful vacation, all the things you're not thinking about. The vast empty cold space surrounding the earth.

The courtyard opens onto a kitchen that occupies  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the house. Outside the overhang of rock above the kitchen, the cold spring feeds tributaries branching between washes of sand and deep pools. Flowers grow in the landed parts and in these small crescents of sand we lie in the sun as if on a large beach.

There are no doors leading to the kitchen just a large hole in the stone face where gravel and sand shifts to dark blue stone below the threshold. Sometimes we track in sand, we are always sweeping away sand, but we never try to divert the lines of water from entering the house. On the way to the refrigerator we walk across a small stream, it keeps us company down a hallway and intercepts us on on the way to the bathroom. The taps are always running, the bathtubs pools in the rock gently overflowing, adding to the malay when open gaps in the ceiling allow light and rain to pour down. The whole house is a fountain and is always, almost flooding.

Tomorrow the streams may shift course slightly, given water pressure from the spring. Everyday the trails of water pattern the floor differently, changing the relation between dry blue stone and the deep glossy indigo of the wet slate. As if the marbling in marble were an active principle, the temperament of the spring darkens or lightens the mood of the house.



Nothing weather and balmy nights. We don't mind traversing streams in such weather.

It's possible to swim in a circuit around the entire property, but it is exceptionally difficult to do so. At moments the pool transgresses the walls of the house by dipping under them, and a few of its tendrils extend into the courtyard in the center of the house. You can reach it only by holding your breath and swimming beneath the house. Little patches of land float in the maze's corners, and wild flowers and grasses grow there peacefully, never too high, as if in the mountains. When we want to fill the strange vases that are found in alcoves around the house, we have to swim around the pool with our scissors and collect what we happen to find.

"That cake tasted a little like glitter."

"It looked like a filter."

"No, it looked like lava."

"It looked like Pahoehoe, not Aa."

"True."

"Where is that chunk you brought from Idaho?  
Can we cut a piece in roughly the same shape?"

"It tastes like moist dust."

"But glittery. A dust of diamonds more than wood."

"Yes, glittery."

"My teeth feel clean!"

“This next one, doesn’t taste taste like glitter. I actually could eat a large piece, it’s light, still black, still filter like, but my teeth feel normal.”

“I miss being disoriented.”

“Henry, it’s the first recipe!”

