

paueru gaizette

パウエル街ゼット

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what do we harvest?

a zine of the powell street festival advocacy and outreach committee



Dear readers,

When the AOC zine team started talking about what to do for our second issue, we thought about what the transition into fall and winter meant for us and how we might express the feelings of seasonal change. We realized that times of change often mean so many different—and sometimes contradictory—things to different people. As the days get shorter and the nights longer, the darkness can bring a quiet peace, but also deep isolation. It can bring the chill of rain or the warmth of

togetherness. It can mean both and all of these things at the very same time. These tensions, we thought, might be expressed by a somewhat simple question: in these times, what do we harvest? And, by extension, how do we harvest it?

In this issue, we hope to challenge ourselves and our readers to consider not only the goodness and abundance of the fall's harvest, but also certain questions we maybe don't ask as often: who gets to enjoy the fruits of a harvest? And who doesn't? Who does the harvesting? Whose lands do we harvest on? How do we make sure the harvest is available to all who need it? And how do we make sure that there is still something to harvest in the years ahead? This issue is our humble attempt to think through these questions.

Harvest first came to mind as a theme because of something I (Nicole) read recently. *Lost Harvests* is a book by historian Sarah Carter and in it, she looks at how during the late nineteenth-century the Canadian government actively prevented Plains Indigenous communities from succeeding in agriculture on the prairies by limiting the land they could farm and the instruments they could use. It's a fairly typical academic history, but for me, it also clearly demonstrated the politics of the "harvest." Through colonialism, capitalism, racism, classism, ableism, climate change (and many other factors), only some people get to access the bounties of the world around us. Others continually endure lost harvests. Others still, are only allowed to do the work of harvesting and rarely get to enjoy the harvest themselves. In this way, the harvest can also be harmful. How might we imagine and realize worlds where we share the labour and abundance of the harvest—where everyone gets something warm to eat when the wind and the world feels cold?

This type of work and these sorts of questions have long been asked by activists in the Downtown Eastside, especially those focused on food sovereignty. This issue stems in part from being inspired by their work and by the conviction that we as Japanese Canadians—who occupy space in the neighbourhood on unceded Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, and Squamish territories—carry a responsibility to engage with both the joy and difficulties of the harvest.

- the editors

Much of the art throughout this issue was created at our annual Minori event that took place in November! At Minori, we gather in Oppenheimer Park, cook a butternut squash miso stew, and share it with folks in the neighbourhood. We also make all sorts of art. This year, we asked folks if they wanted to be included in the zine. Thank you to all (named or unnamed) who shared their work with us! We appreciate you.

Sleeping Underground

Marina Watabe

*The mountains that look down us
Do not exist when covered by mist
The train lights white the tunnel out
Only to make it darker as they pass*

*Sleeping underground
Darkness sings a forgotten melody
Sleeping underground
Tangled with the remnants of a colony
A nightmare is a piece of an old reality that we attempt to tame but fail*

*The mirror that looks inside us
Did not show who we thought we were
It takes a courage to open the eyes
In solid darkness to discover them*

*Speaking underground
A few know that they have been awake
Speaking underground
Who knows the whispers will turn to a quake?
A dream becomes the reality only if you believe it*

*Can we have the same dream, you and me?
The present feeds on the past
Or the other way around?*

*Sleeping underground
Sleeping underground*

park, gulls, sun, people by Angela May



origami lily by Miki Konishi

What do we harvest?

Caleb Nakasaki

As we go into the cold winter months, I'm reminded that for long stretches of time people were bound to annual cycles of growth and harvest. Spring for planting new, Summer for growing, Autumn for harvesting, Winter for waiting. Year after year, cycling survival. We were bound to a natural rhythm.

But the rise of complex machines broke that rhythm and asserted its own. No longer were we bound to wait through winter, or to patiently tend through summer. Every day, every year, every decade was sown with machines, and extended with new fertilizer: money, labour, efficiency, automation.

Early on, it may have seemed an eternal spring, a forever period of planting and growth. The extension of roads like roots, gave the resources for buildings to be planted in neat grids. Cities spiraling outwards in unrestrained shoots and clumps, growing on every flat surface. Up, out, bigger! Stronger! **TALLER, HEAVIER, THICKER**.

The problem with spring of course, is that there is endless potential, but no understanding of the final product. We may have planted seeds for squash, but whose to tell if we will have big squash or little squash? Straight or twisted? Sweet or bitter? In the expansive joy of planting none of this is known. . .

But we are no longer in the spring of machines: we are in the winter. The growth stopped long ago, and harvest took the products that were tended and moved them into our industrial storehouses. Everyday in every way, we are told by bean counters that the beans are going up! There are more beans now than ever before! Bean outlook has never been stronger! But we took the beans from the fields, and with our own hands stored them in the shed for winter. There are no more beans coming. Inventing new ways of bean counting has no effect on the food in our shed.

The question of Harvest that we need to ask is this: were our crops actually any good? Are they good for planting next spring? Are they good for eating? Or are they only good for keeping warm?

We live in a fundamental period of reassessment. Winter is a time to look at the year and decide if we need to make changes for our future. Knowing what we know about this crop, are there changes we should make for next year? Let's go into the storehouse. Let's look at our stockpiles closely. The piles of wheat, and rice, and pickles, and salmon.

Lets shine a light on them.

Lets reach into the pile.

Lets pull out a potato.

Lets feel its groves, and its wet, decaying rot.

Is this what we want to eat? Is this what we want to plant? Is this what we want for ourselves?



root breakdown

Nicole Yakashiro



"Saina ma'ase" means "thank you" in fino' CHamoru. Saina ma'ase, Kelsey, for teaching us this phrase!

Reconnection

Kelsey Sablan Martin

Language is / a dictionary poem

Erica Hiroko Isomura

part one: gwaa

I may be unable
to discern

rising or falling inflections
of gwong dong waa

and yet, faintly...

I can hear clicking of ancestral tongue

— on the menu —

a seasonal squash-
tamari roasted broccolini-
kale kimchi-miso
vegan pizza. \$18.

sugar-free gluten-free goji
pumpkin seed granola
topped with almond butter,
hemp hearts & açai. \$14.



I would never live it down
if I blew forty dollars

at a lo faan eatery
in chinatown

in canto, gwaa means squash
(melon or gourd)

as in *i feel squashed here*
culture whispers

still standing
on the sidewalk, glancing around

I recognize an elderly woman
whose feet are planted on the ground

on main street
between the bougie pizzeria & a cocktail-coffee bar

Kong TaaI frowns: "I just want a place where I can sit down
with my friends and eat"¹

& who thought this place needed to become
a coffee-town?

I look at the signs and wonder
what is the point!

chinese caricatures engraved in English
on menus and glass doors

for profit--these people do not serve food
neighbourhood seniors can afford

¹ Mrs. Kong in "We are too poor to afford anything," report on retail gentrification in the DTES by the Carnegie Community Action Team 加麗基社區行動計劃

part two: a dictionary poem

瓜 gwaa1	a squash, melon, or gourd
寡 gwaa2	tasteless and bland
掛 (挂) gwaa3	(v.) to miss (someone); (adv.) maybe
剮 (剮) gwaa2	cut off the flesh as punishment
呱 gwaa1	the croaking sound of a frog
瓜 gwaa1	to die
寡 gwaa2	widowed
掛 (挂) gwaa3	to hang up (the phone)

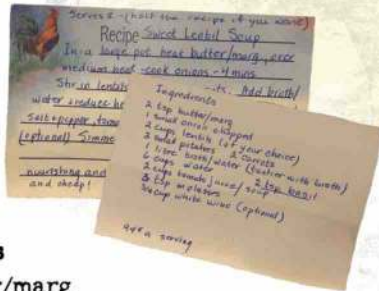
Sweet Lentil Soup (approx. \$2 / serving)

from Maryanne Belcher (née Hamaguchi)

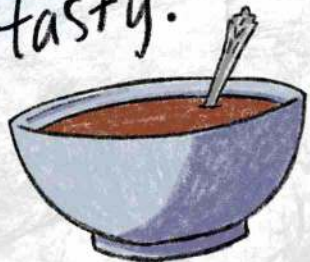
In a large pot, heat butter/marg., over medium heat - cook onions - 4 mins. Stir in lentils, potatoes + carrots. Add broth/water & reduce heat to simmer - 20 mins. Add basil, salt + pepper, tomato juice/soup, molasses + wine (optional). Simmer 5 min or til veggies are done.

Ingredients

- 2 tsp butter/marg
- 1 small onion chopped
- 2 cups lentils (of your choice)
- 2 small potatoes
- 2 carrots
- 1 litre broth/water (tastier with broth)
- 6 cups water
- 2 tsp basil
- 2 cups tomato juice/soup
- 2-3 tsp molasses
- ½ cup white wine (optional)



美味しい!
tasty!



Incident Report

Date: September 25, 2022
Location: [redacted]'s house

After hello's and hugs, we don our slippers, shuffle down the hall, and sit down at the table. Together. We're sitting in the glow of home. We're eating Rickety Rickshaw Bowls ("don't know about the name but it looks yummy!"), drinking barley tea, and shooting the shit. We're joined by pots and pans, old Powell Street Festival posters, art, books, magazines, and *people* - who are either elders or friends or lovers or fellow community members (depending on which of us you ask). We're in some planetary space, suspended from and totally smack-dab in reality. And yet, for all the magic of the evening, of course, we're only ourselves, the three of us, nestled into the night like little creatures in a burrow. We're just ourselves, at [redacted]'s house.

We're talking, talking, talking, and the conversation is *good*.

It is *good*.

Good, good, good.

It is hearth.

Warm.

Alight in the kindling of honesty, barley tea, and spring rolls.

When we leave, we step into the autumnal night and get in the car and we look at each other and we don't know what has happened other than we have been changed - by the fact that we stayed the same. By the fact that the whole time, at [redacted]'s house, we stayed utterly, overwhelmingly, recklessly the same. By the fact that we were ourselves, the way we always are; and still, we were welcomed.



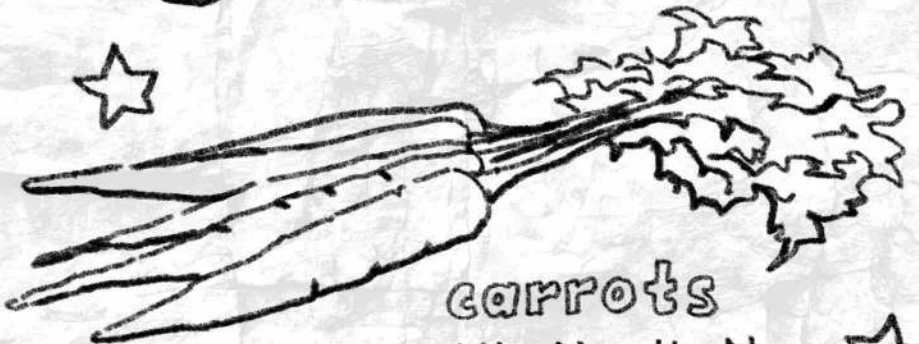
autumn veggies

A COLOURING PAGE



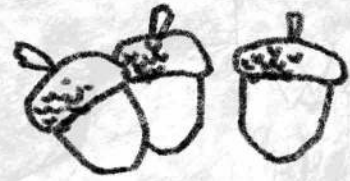
winter squash

KA · BO · CHA
カボチャ
[南瓜]



carrots

NI · N · JI · N
にんじん
[人参]





burdock root

GO · BO (u)

ごぼう

[牛蒡]

you barely pronounce
the "u" sound here!



lotus root

RE · N · KO · N

レンコン

[蓮根]



pine mushroom

MA · TSU · TA · KE

マツタケ

[松茸]



Congratulations, Kathy Shimizu

On October 30, 2022, Kathy Shimizu was awarded the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award!

Have you ever seen a woman biking around Vancouver, wearing a backpack, with about six other various bags and backpacks variously attached to her bicycle? Did she have a single ponytail sticking out from beneath her helmet? Or perhaps two pigtails? Two braids? If so, you have probably witnessed the literal drive of Kathy Shimizu.

Many of you probably know Kathy. If you know her from sitting with her on committees, boards, and all the many ad-hoc community groups of which Kathy is a part, then you know that she arrives at meetings bearing snacks - rice crackers, usually (which she retrieves, of course, from one of her many bags.) You know that she gets people organized. You know that she is capable of seeing people's strength when people cannot see it themselves. You know that she is one of the busiest people around town; and you know that even so, she makes time for you, for the people around her, for all of us.

Here, we celebrate Kathy Shimizu for all her many achievements, the 'nuts and bolts' reasons that she received the National Association of Japanese Canadians' Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award - but we want to go beyond that, too. We want to take a moment to recognize that what it takes to do human rights work, and to achieve the kinds of things that Kathy has achieved, is, in a very basic way, to be human.

One of the most beautiful things about Kathy is how she tries. She tries, and tries, and tries. She never seems to stop. Many of us wonder if she ever sleeps. (And the word on the street is that she doesn't!) But just like how she bikes around the city, here and there, peddling away, that is her approach to activism, too: she keeps going, and going, and going.

Congratulations, Kathy Shimizul

Part of how Kathy is able to keep going and going and going seems to be her capacity to generate hope. Sometimes, it seems like she generates it straight out of thin air. You can be at a demonstration with Kathy, or a protest, or up at City Hall, after a throng of people each delivered their five-minute speeches to Mayor and Council; and although you're all gathered together, a big group of you, doing your best, the powers that be are as forceful as anything and morale is low. You step outside. Maybe it's pouring rain. Everyone's hungry. You pick a place to go - to eat. When you get there, the place turns out to be closed. Morale sinks lower. And Kathy will turn around and go, "Aw! Well, where else can we go??" (And then, in all likelihood, she will be the person to figure out where to go next, to get everyone food, to get back some morale.)

Of course, this is not to say that Kathy never feels low. Or sad. Or angry. Or hurt. To be human is to be vulnerable, even fallible. Maybe what people need, for example, in the instance above, is not necessarily food, but for someone to recognize the struggle of the situation, to sit with them in feeling low; and maybe Kathy will offer food when what people need, first, is listening, understanding, or sitting with.

But that's the thing: Kathy tries. She has a go. She gives it a shot. She tries her best but is (from what we can tell) unafraid to make mistakes. In this way, she is brave in a very real, everyday way. It is a precious thing, this kind of bravery - not just to do the big stuff, but to concentrate on the "little" stuff, and to see that as fundamentally a part of the work of striving for human rights - and more broadly, for justice.

This is so much of Kathy's work: to keep us all going, in the day-to-day, to generate hope, to be brave, to make mistakes, to keep trying anyway. Working towards human rights - and even working for justice beyond a framework of "human rights" requires sustenance and spirit.

Thank you, Kathy, from all of us who you have supported, mentored, worked with, stood beside, for your sustenance and spirit. We love you! Here's to YOU, Kathy Shimizul!



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