author’s efforts presented for the reader’s delectation on a single “menu” in such a fascinating volume.

—Dr. Lynn Visson, Monterey Institute of International Studies

**Bookends**

*Eat My Globe: One Year to Go Everywhere and Eat Everything*
Simon Majumdar
New York: Free Press, 2009
xviii + 279 pp. $26.00 (cloth)

“The bastard can write.”

These are the words that Anthony Bourdain bestows on Simon Majumdar, former book publisher and now heralded food blogger and author of the kinetic memoir cum gastronomic travel adventure *Eat My Globe: One Year to Go Everywhere and Eat Everything*. Bourdain is correct: Majumdar can write. He can also eat. A lot. With passion, reverence, gusto, hilarity, and verisimilitude.

The premise for his book is simple. Feeling trapped and bored by a job he “loathed,” Majumdar stumbled upon a notebook with a to-do list for his life, which included having a suit made to measure, running a marathon, fixing his teeth (he’s British, enough said), and—the impetus for the book—GO EVERYWHERE, EAT EVERYTHING, spelled out in bold capital letters. And that’s pretty close to what he did. He quit his job, drained his bank account, and endured close to one hundred flights to and through more than thirty countries in an attempt to sample the world’s food.

With wit, humor, and a desire to follow food to its source, Majumdar writes in great detail and with refreshing candor about his gustatory experiences. He is not influenced by cultural trends or celebrity imprimatur, as evidenced by his harsh criticism of his meal at Chez Panisse—“vegetables so mushy I wanted to look in the kitchen to see if the old cook from my elementary school had been flown in especially for the occasion” (pp.160–161). He just as easily lavishes praise on the tiny Mrs. King’s Pork Pies in the town of Melton Mowbry, calling the pies served there one of the greatest tastes in the world. Such pronouncements make you trust Majumdar as a writer, not to mention be more forgiving for his over-the-top enthusiasm, which can sometimes slide into the excess of a devotee.

The appendices should not be overlooked. They underscore Majumdar’s wonderful humor and delight in the world of food—especially his top twenty tastes, including pho in Hanoi, *jamón Ibérico* in Spain, and souvlaki in Melbourne; and top ten worst tastes (braised dog in China, cod sperm sushi in Japan, and fermented mare’s milk in Mongolia).

It seems that Majumdar’s parents (to whom he lovingly dedicates the book) as well as his brother (whom he calls “the Great Salami”) fueled his lifelong love for and pursuit of the world’s greatest food. This helps explain not only why the book is so interesting but why Majumdar is, as well. As he says about his quests, “Food is not just what I eat, it is what I am and what I do” (p.xvii).

—Stefani Bardin, New York State University at Buffalo

*The Gastronomy of Marriage: A Memoir of Food and Love*
Michelle Maisto
New York: Random House, 2009
xvii + 236 pp. $15.00 (cloth)

Food and love are not new topics in the memoir genre—we have seen a number of these books in recent years, and some of them even make it to the big screen. So is there room for another food and love story? Absolutely, when it is as beautifully written and exquisitely detailed as Michelle Maisto’s *The Gastronomy of Marriage: A Memoir of Food and Love*.

Maisto’s memoir is a journey through one couple’s preparation for their upcoming wedding. Structurally, the book outlines the relationship between Maisto and Rich, her soon-to-be husband, as they undergo the stress of paying for and organizing a wedding. Recipes for their favorite dishes are interspersed throughout the book—a common technique in memoirs about food. Maisto’s recipes, however, have a more personal and conversational tone than recipe sections I have come across in other memoirs. An expansion of the recipes in this book would do very well in the cookbook genre.

As is evident from both the narrative and the recipes, this couple loves food, which connects them from the very first date when Rich orders a chocolate soufflé. “The bastard can write.” These are the words that Anthony Bourdain bestows on Simon Majumdar, former book publisher and now heralded food blogger and author of the kinetic memoir *Eat My Globe: One Year to Go Everywhere and Eat Everything*. Bourdain is correct: Majumdar can write. He can also eat. A lot. With passion, reverence, gusto, hilarity, and verisimilitude.

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