

the United States. Neoliberal regulation has enabled agribusiness multinationals to thrive based on highly processed foods, many of them originating in these crops, a diet loaded with refined flour and sugars—and meat. This neoliberal diet has been exported around the globe, often at the expense of people's health.

Sheldon Krinsky offers a fine synthesis of risk analysis of biotechnology, with its narrow focus, points to huge lacunae in long-term studies, and points to larger socioeconomic impact analysis of a food system controlled by oligopolistic structures. How social movements and the state can change them for a healthier diet should be at the center of future studies.

—Gerardo Otero, *Simon Fraser University*

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Still Hungry in America

Photographs by Al Clayton, Text by Robert Coles, Introduction by Edward M. Kennedy, New Foreword by Thomas J. Ward, Jr.
Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018
136 pp. 101 photographs. \$32.95 (paper)

Still Hungry in America, originally published in 1969, emerged out of a July 1967 hearing before the United States Congress's Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty. Al Clayton's photographs were produced to support Dr. Robert Coles's congressional report illuminating food and health conditions among the poor in Appalachia, rural Mississippi, and Atlanta, Georgia. Taken together, the words and pictures create a powerful—and at times heart-breaking—statement about poverty and malnutrition in the United States. This reissue with a new foreword by Professor Thomas J. Ward, Jr., a historian of health and poverty in the American South, provides an insightful history and contemporary statistics to give this volume new context and relevance.

Most readers will likely be struck first by the photographs. Many of them, including the cover image, cause one to wonder whether or not they are from the seminal body of work created by the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the 1930s. The impulse to compare Clayton's work to that of the FSA is both helpful and harmful, accurate and inaccurate, but also inevitable. The FSA photographs of Depression-era

America attempted to make difficult stories and struggling, overlooked people more visually palatable to the public in order to be seen widely and taken seriously. It was a noble photographic endeavor that changed the cultural landscape. Exceptionally skilled and well-intentioned photographers harnessed the aesthetics of (mostly) black and white photography to make extraordinary portraits and record devastated landscapes. Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* has become an iconic American image—so much so that we have come to fetishize and revere images like hers that ennoble the poor and destitute. Today, we might dub it “poverty porn.”

This is our burden as contemporary readers. We need to look closely and open our hearts to Clayton's stark imagery. His photographs differ from the FSA to some degree, but they are linked via the persistent illustration of dilapidated shacks without indoor plumbing or electricity and porches populated by people in threadbare clothes. It is an upsetting visual cue that by the 1960s, and even in 2018 at the time of the book's reissue, the state of poverty and food insecurity in the United States has not changed much for some since the Great Depression. Clayton's photographs are not accompanied by captions to ground the reader with names, ages, locations, or other bits of description. What information one can find is within the text. As a result, the images become archetypes and general representations, while sometimes offering very specific visual details of health conditions. The faces and gestures of his subjects echo the voices Coles incorporates in the accompanying text. They are the faces and bodies of the starved and hungry, the wary child and the weary parent. His subjects are self-aware, stoic, and often resolved. However, mixed in are tight hugs, gentle hands, and hopeful smiles that indicate all is not lost for the subjects' futures (or for the readers' hearts).

Coles's writing is a frank and direct description of the physical conditions of the people and environments he encountered. However, while the reader senses that his impulse is to be clinically descriptive, as would be expected of a Harvard research psychiatrist and professor, Coles's compassion is also apparent. Much of his writing includes direct quotes of those he interviewed, a signature style for which he would later be known. He allows those who are hungry and living in poverty to have a voice in describing their situations. In doing so, the reader is often presented with thoughtful, dignified, and resolute perspectives from the subjects themselves. They speak directly of the impact of industrial agriculture and mechanized mining. The trickle-down effect that large corporations had on many communities included toxic chemicals and other byproducts ruining accessible water; taking away people's land; and pushing individuals out

of jobs. Coles's participants relate how their pride pulled them through and helped them navigate derision, racism, and being social and political outliers.

While the images and texts about the lack of food and poverty are primary, there are important subtexts that must be noted and are additional reasons to read this book. When originally written, the goal was to bring real people and their plight forward to Congress for immediate legislation. Today, we can see that Coles understood it takes scaffolded political, economic, social, and cultural strategies to lift people out of poverty. There are historical lessons visible now for political scientists and historians to evaluate. There is plenty for economists to wrestle with about how and why poverty and wealth coexist, often in proximity. Educators have perhaps come the furthest to understand that children do not learn when they are cold, hungry, and ashamed, but not all school systems have fully accommodated these realities. Perhaps the most subtle but important aspect is Coles's own self-awareness in his role as an investigator. He occasionally indicates when he reevaluated and questioned his own bias and social class to recognize they could be part of the problem. Perhaps this is a key lesson for us readers. His openness as an investigator to learning about people and striving to deeply understand them rather than just gathering data, unveils institutional social and political biases, which hold economic structures in place that actually sustain poverty and food insecurity.

Everyone should read this book for there is much to glean even from such a slim volume. The images and texts balance the hard messages with nuggets of information to help the reader understand how a wealthy, food-rich country can have citizens starving in rural and urban areas even today. The next step is for inspired readers to use their time, money, and votes to help support programs and legislation that might solve hunger in America once and for all.

—Shannon Thomas Perich, *National Museum of American History*,
Washington, DC

Here Let Us Feast: A Book of Banquets

M. F. K. Fisher

Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2018

378 pp. \$19.95 (paper)

If you have not yet had the pleasure of encountering the work of M. F. K. Fisher, *Here Let Us Feast*, her eclectic primary source collection of food writing first published in 1946, is not the most obvious place to start. After all, Fisher left many other more likely points of entry for those new to her work on eating and drinking: *Serve It Forth*, *The Gastronomical Me*, *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, and dozens of other books and essays.

Whether you know Fisher already or not, however, there is something both deeply pleasurable and illuminating in this new edition of her favorite food writing by other authors, which includes an introduction by Betty Fussell. Fisher's choices are intensely personal, with excerpted sources ranging from the Bible to *A Thousand and One Nights* to Jane Austen to Leo Tolstoy to *Alice in Wonderland* to John Steinbeck. Selections are interspersed with Fisher's occasionally quirky commentary, such as when she notes that modern diets based on processed food probably render human flesh unpalatable, although she could imagine relishing a "well-rounded adolescent" who had been raised in the country on "fresh apples and plenty of creamy milk." Readers' reactions are likely to be personal too, and their favorite parts will probably say more about their own tastes than about Fisher or anything else. As for me, Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's description of seducing two abstemious elderly neighbors into an epic day of feasting and drinking has been bouncing around my brain, as has his perfect observation, translated by Fisher herself: "Long practice has taught me that one pleasure leads to another, and that once headed along this path a man loses the power of refusal."

This is not a typical primary source reader. The selections are idiosyncratic and lean heavily toward Western sources and toward fiction. Written more than seventy years ago, moreover, Fisher's commentary would itself be a primary source in a classroom context, and some of her casual comments on ethnicity and gender would rightly raise objections. Dated though she is on some matters, however, on others she feels uncannily modern, even timeless. An unapologetic sensualist, Fisher was gloriously alive to the physical pleasures of food and alcohol, and her writing has drawn in generation after generation in part because she seems to invite readers to live as fully as she did.

Yet however ardently Fisher sucked the marrow from life, she was never a simple bon vivant. At the very time she was working on *Here Let Us Feast* in the mid-1940s, she was experiencing personal tumult and tragedy, including the suicides of her brother and second husband, and some of that depth of experience feels palpable in all her writing afterwards. In this collection, hardly all excerpts are happy tales of feasting. One of Fisher's "favorite meals in all of literature," for instance, is the blue scene from W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* where a puritanical vicar eats a single boiled egg in front of his hungry, grieving, adolescent nephew, offering him only the tiny dome of the egg's top and considering himself very generous for doing so, too. The scene was unforgettable, Fisher wrote, for "its downright selfish hatefulness." Through Fisher's eyes, we see the tragedy