

IT'S 1969. APRIL. IT'S 3 A.M. At that time, it was quite cold in Turin, Northern Italy, in the wee hours of the morning, a reality not even the fascist propaganda of "Italy, Garden of Europe" had been able to change. And I'm wearing shorts, sandals, and a striped T-shirt as, with sticky eyes and dazed by the short sleep, I run down the five stories of stairs of the walk-up where I spent a good part of my childhood at my maternal grandmother's house.

My grandma Mariuccia, like her sister Anna, who is quietly waiting for us downstairs, is a street vendor at the local open market, rain, snow, or sunshine. My grandma specializes in fruit, my aunt sells vegetables. The sisters immigrated from rural Southern Italy to the industrial city as young children in the late 1920s—before the mass internal migration of the 1950s and 1960s—in the wake of the peasant uprising in the durum wheat latifundia of Puglia. Half the rural town of Cerignola relocated to the Barriera di Milano neighborhood of Turin, creating an urban village in the city and two twin communities, one North and one South, sending people, food, things, and information back and forth in flows. Nonna Mariuccia married a man from a large Torinese artisan family, Nonno Beppe, creating serious controversy in both families—coming from separate anthropological universes, and gastronomies.

Nonna Mariuccia, Zia Anna, and I wade into the dark as we silently walk across the deserted square of the open market—in just a matter of a few hours, with the light, a confusion of voices, colors, faces, and odors will reign over the naked pavement—to get to the stop of streetcar number 9, which, in a symphony of shrieks and clangs, takes us to a very different neighborhood, to the city's wholesale produce market. The market is overwhelming with noises and movement. The truck drivers, who drove all day and night from as far as Sicily or Naples, park their trucks so the backs are open, like enormous mouths, toward the buying bystanders, a very mixed crowd. The truck drivers munch on sausage or tomato sandwiches and drink beer at four in the morning while the middlemen scream in all Italian dialects, tossing around crates of apricots and sacks of potatoes onto the biggest scales I have ever thought existed. Upon my first visit I had been confused about my grandma asking for "ten yellow peaches" and been given ten crates of the fruit, not ten fruits. But now I know. Rolls of cash, big brown bills, are displayed upfront and my grandma hands some of the money to a guy with a van, a *familiare* car, as it was then called, that she trusts to deliver in a couple of hours the fruit she just bought right to her stall, marked by only four little white corners painted on the ground.

Dawn is approaching. On our way back to Barriera di Milano and the street market where my grandmother and aunt soon need to be at work, we see, on the opposite track, advancing streetcars fully packed with factory workers en route to the Mirafiori automobile plant to begin their six o'clock morning shift. Many of the women, older people, and occasional children shopping at my grandma's fruit stand are their families. Everyone's

a migrant at the market: everyone is from somewhere else and has feelings toward the many others they see, hear, smell, and bump into. Food is also from somewhere else, from places imagined through that food name, and shows up at the market only in season, that is, two weeks every year. In June, my grandma sells Duroni di Vignola, dark, firm, and sweet cherries, which to me have the great advantage of being safe from containing the fleshy little worms the native Torinese call *Giuanin* (Johnny), so often present in the smaller and softer varieties when they're fully ripe. In July, she sells the White Peach from Naples which, when I bite into it, releases a bout of sugary, sticky juice that drips down my forearm; in August, *ramasin*—small bittersweet plums, vaguely tasting like tobacco, you can't stop eating and pit spitting—from Saluzzo.

Everything and every move you make is personalized at the market: it makes a big difference who you are buying your food from, who s/he is to you. The food actually tastes different because of the purveyor—maybe it's the sweat—so the escarole from Uncle Vito or the ricotta cheese from *comare* Antonietta tastes like them, and has a biography. When, in the middle of the morning, I'm sent out to buy from some relative, even if that means walking all the way to the other end of the market, I'm stopped by three women, all dressed in black, with heart-shaped pendants with the photo of the deceased, who ask each other (they aren't really talking to me) if I'm the grandson of Mariuccia, the nephew of Anna, the daughters of *mastro* Vincenzo, may he Rest In Peace, and resolve to lift me and press my face into their warm and soft breasts.

The boundaries between real, material everyday life and the extraterrestrial, the magical, and the holy are so permeable at the market; and foods and plants are thought to have medical, even salvific effects. I fear that there might be horsemeat, which has a weird sweet taste I hate, for dinner tonight, because I'm anemic. Later in her life, grandma—who refuses to use the newly introduced plastic pasta colander because she thinks it poisons food—would routinely go to doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies, but today, and she's taking me with her, she's going to her favorite *erboristeria*, a shop selling a variety of curative herbs, objects, and talismans. The secularization of Zia Anna happened only when, after having devotedly prayed and sacrificed to Saint Anthony for years, the saint failed her and let Nonno Vincenzo die. In a famous bout of rage, Zia Anna threw all her St. Anthony paraphernalia into the street, onto the market, from the window of her first-floor flat. Among the vendors, or the helpers, many have physical or intellectual disabilities, reflecting the general lack of trust in the medicalization of the issues somebody in the family may have. But it's past one in the afternoon and it's time to load the unsold crates and sacks onto the pushcart, fold the stall, and pull the cart toward the storage. Until tomorrow.

In retrospect, even back then, some thirty years before I became a Food Studies scholar, the market, and by extension the whole world of food, looked all about mobility and diversity to me. Not only because of my life story, but as one of the few members of the Editorial Collective of *Gastronomica* based outside North America and the only one based in (Southern) Europe, the themes of mobility and diversity in food are especially close and dear to me. In my role as part of the so-called “acquisitions cluster” of our collective, I aim to promote variety in the topics and approaches taken by our contents; to extend our diversity of voices in the journal by encouraging authors across class, racial, gender, sexual orientation, language, and geographical divides to contribute to the journal; and to help expand the readership of *Gastronomica* outside and beyond the more frequented grounds of North America and Western Europe. I therefore could not be luckier for and more excited about having the opportunity of being the editor of an issue—this one in your hands—widely

dedicated to mobility and diversity in food provision, highlighting marketplaces as intriguing and revealing sites of observation and experience.

The first section, “Street Markets, Street Food,” opens with Krishnendu Ray’s “Rethinking Street Vending,” a piece that originated as his address at the annual *Gastronomica* Distinguished Lecture at the SOAS Food Studies Centre. Ray discusses street food as a form of food provisioning that, in the West, has been significantly curtailed by modernity, food industrialization, and the capitalist rationalization of urban space, with wide-ranging consequences on consumer taste, health, and sociability. Drawing on classic and recent sociological theory and historical literature, and examples from India and South Africa, Ray shows how street food and street markets transcend their capitalist and exchange functions to bring “liveliness” to cities, offering vendors, shoppers, and strollers the experience of other cultures and other worlds, including interclass relations. So the answer to the question “could good food be made congruent with good livelihoods for poor people and a lively city?” seems to be a resounding yes. In her response to Ray’s address, Sandra C. Mendiola García describes the open markets of Puebla, Mexico, in images evoking the pulsating space and rhythm of consumption of the street and insisting upon street food vendor activism (mobilization). Threatened by state policing and intense capitalist exploitation of the urban space, global city street vendors like Puebla’s increasingly have to self-organize and fight for their right to make a living and contribute to urban food systems and vitality. The second response, penned by Jane Battersby, similarly suggests that in the colonial and postcolonial city, state power has most decidedly construed street food vending as residual, irrational, and dangerous. Battersby recommends that African street vendor activists look at history to identify the best strategies to navigate between the pressures of state control and the needs of civil society. A closing epilogue offered by Noah Allison and Jaclyn Rohel asks food scholars to consider adopting an expansive definition of the notion of “street food” that can encompass an extended range of food provisioning and social interactions in shared urban spaces.

The issue’s second section, “Food, Culture, and Nation,” focuses on the power of food and its memory to generate and nurture multiple collective identities, and opens with Rose Wellman’s social and cultural history of jello in Iran. Wellman shows that food represents a “biomoral, physio-sacred substance” for the Basiji community of Iran. Halal (meaning safe, good, healthy) food is created multidimensionally: it’s a matter of ingredients, of processing techniques and practices, and of shopping choices—of where and from whom the food is purchased. In the religious and state-sanctioned halal geography of consumption, food needs to be bought in a Muslim market, and for it to be pure the vendor also needs to be pure. All this is shown through the colored semitransparent lens of jello, an industrial food that complicatedly floats in and out the sphere of the halal.

Next, Eric C. Rath’s piece examines *funazushi*, a Japanese food made with fermented carp and rice and widely supposed to be the most ancient form of sushi. The exploration of *funazushi*’s claims of originality is largely a history of taste. At the turn of the nineteenth century, sushi became less a method to preserve fish through fermentation and more a way to serve fish with flavored rice, thus marginalizing the characteristically sour taste of *funazushi* from its sensory palette and making it “ancient.” Rath narrates his travels across Japan in search of *funazushi*, emphasizing once more that who makes a food and where that food is eaten make it taste differently, and suggesting that—because of its preparation and its taste—*funazushi* may be not only sushi’s past but also its future, in a reconfiguration of taste in new social, cultural, and technological contexts.

Paul Lewis rounds out the section with an account of his visit to China as an ambassador for Irish artisanal high-quality food and restaurants. Traveling means comparing, and self-reflecting on one's own (food) identity; as Lewis notes, the mobility of food juxtaposes tastes, cultures, and visions of the world, producing more diversity. "Oysters on the Half Shell" by Courtney Nzeribe provides a fleshy and sizzling evidence of life and food in art.

The issue's third section, on "Politics and Ethics of Taste," opens with the question, "What Is a Superfood Anyway?" Here Melinda Butterworth, Georgia Davis, Kristina Bishop, Luz Reyna, and Alyssa Rhodes dissect this hotly debated category of edibles by exploring the nutritional, economic, political, and ethical meanings that such a label entails. The definition of "superfood" appears to have become grounds for a power struggle among many self-identifying authorities in the field, arguing over who decides which food deserves the hyperbole rather than defining and agreeing upon a set of objective features and definitions. What all superfood experts have in common is their insistence on promoting a version of ethical eating that enforces a "duty to do well" on the part of the consumer. The entire idea of "superfood," then, ensnares the consumer in a discourse about personal responsibility in managing health and reducing the risk of disease.

The article that follows, "Confronting Whiteness in Kansas City's Local Food Movement" by Chhaya Kolavalli, tackles directly the issue of diversity in local food markets, and interrogates the powerful notions of "local food" and "food sovereignty" as rooted in exclusion as well as inclusion. Drawing on interviews with local food advocates in Kansas City, Kolavalli identifies a problematic discourse generically celebrating diversity in the stalls via the phenotypical appearance of vendors, yet still leaving the structures of unequal relations of power and racial inequalities in the local food system largely, if not utterly, untouched and unquestioned.

Victoria Dickenson's piece completes the section, illustrating, in a vocabulary of names, colors, and tastes, the varied foodscape of Newfoundland in the summer, which includes *baccalà alla livornese* (cod simmered in tomato and onions) and Turin's specialty food *bagna cauda* (a hot dip made of melted anchovies and garlic). Images of "Fresh" in the food photography by Jaina Cipriano articulate the consuming experience in an architecture of colors and shapes.

This issue's exploration of food mobility and diversity ends with two more stories from Canada in the section "Migrant Food Memories." First, we present Anelyse M. Weiler's interview with Kim Thúy, a migrant restaurateur to Montreal, and a published, highly regarded novelist, with a new cookbook from her Vietnamese kitchen, and then close with "A Literary History of the Mandarin Orange in Canada," by Shelley Boyd, Nathalie Cooke, and Alexia Moyer, which describes Japanese mandarin oranges' evocative power in Canadian literature, representing the diversity of food in the face of challenging climatic circumstances.

I began this letter with memories of my grandma and aunt, migrant women workers who made a living selling food on the street, in sunshine, rain, and snow, and I have come to realize how much food, the mobility and exchange of food, the diversity of food and of those who give it to us, is such a big part of our socialization and understanding of the world, for all of us. I hope you will enjoy the following pages, making up the fourth issue published since the inception of the new editorial collective of *Gastronomica*. A diverse group ourselves, we look forward to continuing to deliver stories of food mobility and diversity, from different places and from many different voices.

—Simone Cinotto for the *Gastronomica* Editorial Collective, February 2020