



ON BREAD, BAKING, AND FERMENTATION.



I am home, and consistently watched now. In some ways I have opened my door a crack and allowed myself to be seen, I have no control of how people see me when I sleep. They will take me how they take me. When I'm awake I read many recipes, on how to bake, and cook, and prepare things to nourish myself. I am attempting to use up the hours in a day. When making bread, I am exercising myself in domesticity, in feeling comfortable at home with time, to sustain myself. I believe that in making bread, in every person who is home and indulging in cooking and baking as an art and skilled labor, we are attempting to become self sufficient, to take the simplest and most gratifying step towards taking care of oneself, moving away from the aids of others, most notably systems that oppress and drain us. Sourdough being our prime example, you feed the dough, and in turn it will feed you. Without even the need of yeast or other leaveners, if one day one could farm and process their own wheat and have a well, and learn to boil water into salt, they could fully sustain themselves. In making matzah one learns this power, how quickly you must make your dough to make sure it is unleavened. 18 minutes or less.



This brings me to the resurgence of fermentation, gardening, and foraging in modern society. I believe that people feel disconnected from being able to sustain themselves. More than that though people feel afraid, of not being able to provide for themselves, of the systems in place failing them or more aptly turning against them. I can no longer be blind to my unpreparedness, when I am home, when I should be ready to leave, when I can feel so many people being swallowed, when I am being chewed. Fermentation, cured food, lasts us, it takes the bacterias and dirt that naturally occur and uses them to preserve things that can sustain us. All fermentation could be described as a controlled rot, through this we may add some health to our food as well as time to its shelf life. The sour flavors of food decaying, when air cannot reach it to rot it: Survival does not make room for luxury, my palate has a taste for salt and acid, I dream about chocolate. I think that in some ways I am destroying myself, I sometimes think I would rather live my whole life without actualizing parts of myself if it meant keeping my home clean and beautiful. My pickles taste more sour everyday.







Once again reminded of Douglas Crimp's How to have promiscuity in an Epidemic. The skin that forms on bread and restricts its rise. The awareness of each particle of flour and salt that may fall on the floor. Being seen in this home, cleanliness is a magnifying glass on a bright day. I don't dream of greatness, I dream of feeling comfortable being touched, my hands in dough and bread on your plate. Bread is a romantic house, alone on a hill. I would like to sew my own clothes, weave my own fabrics, to make my own pots and tables and furniture, to stoke a fire, to learn to be a blacksmith even. Is it strange to dream of the days of singular artisans? I do not know if I even care if my bread is that good, the crumb is somewhat dense and it's taste of cheap whole wheat is not the best, but I did not need to depend on someone else. We feel the outside shutting us in, not just in the name of a viral pandemic but as the world becomes more and more inaccessible. The dreams of life we had as children are slipping, if we can cook a stable meal and make a stable home maybe we will be okay and feel safe. Perhaps if I could make a beautiful bread I could breathe easier in a home by myself, be able to give up childish dreams, find peace in solitude and waiting, grab back the rag and clean the floor perfectly for myself. Wide hips and my persisting dreams from childhood of what I could be as a man. A man who makes a home. A man who can feel peace and pleasure.



Eat you bread and feed you friends. Bread is not my culture in many ways. Survival and domesticity are mine.