

## Food Porn

### Asparagus

Pubescent vernal shoots--  
at once, adolescent  
and archaic;  
at once, callow stripling  
and old soul.

Ardent herb of Aphrodite!  
Tantric twig!  
Verdant spire of Kama Sutrán lore!

Feted in the cookbook of ancient Apicius,  
praised as medicament by the great physician Galen,  
chronicled as offering to Egyptian gods of old.

Best harvested in your puerility,  
your delicate tips, points d'amour,  
a favorite of the king's courtesan.

Best quickly cooked—  
swiftly stir-fried in sesame oil,  
roasted posthaste in extra-virgin nectar of the olive,  
sautéed in brown butter,  
you are the *bonne bouche* of spring.

But take heed!  
Hearken to your griddle!  
Let not your tender buds linger overlong in the flame,  
lest they too quickly achieve their climacteric,  
and wither, wilted and wan.

Still, think not this comestible unduly ephemeral,  
for this fleeting and fragile culinary pleasure  
leaves a fragrant souvenir,  
a peculiar perfume  
lingering, ambrosial and pungent,  
in the passing stream.

## Sweet Potato

Sacred sacchariferous spud!  
You rise from the soil as the sun ascends from the horizon.

Millennium upon millennium, paladin of the hungry,  
your fecund produce, undaunted by cyclone and flood,  
is golden manna from deep in the earth.

In Japan, you are paired with Sake  
and offered to the autumnal moon  
with prayers for an abundant harvest.

In America, you are boiled and mashed  
shunted into a casserole  
crowned by marshmallows.  
Such is our folly: gilding the lily with fool's gold!

Better steamed until tender and sprinkled with salt,  
roasted in olive oil,  
or sautéed in a fragrant ablution of coconut oil and garam masala.

Better baked in your humble, threadbare jacket  
oozing your caramelized lifeblood  
through piercings by the sharp knife which now splits you asunder  
revealing moist, sun-kissed flesh  
drizzled with droplets of brown butter  
and a dash of cinnamon.

O rich and flaming root!  
You are the sun rising in my mouth.  
I savor your blazing luminescence!

## **Broccoli**

O broccolo, flowering crest of cabbage  
wee tree  
noble staple of the Roman Empire

O beautiful bouquet of bounteous blossoms yet unbloomed  
tightly held in myriad miniature fists of malachite hue

Bejeweled floret of jadeite!  
How proudly perch the clustered buds of verdigris  
atop your tumid pedicle.

Yet, stripped of your callous bark,  
you reveal a tender heart  
aching to be julienned  
thirsting for anointment with oil  
and the baptism of steam.

With heat's mellifluent influence,  
your tiny branches effloresce  
into supple jewels of glimmering emerald.

Delicate virgin buds burst in my mouth,  
gushing their claret of savory green.

O cruciferous topiary,  
let me be lost in your peppery coppice!

## **Mushroom**

Fruit of fungus  
feigner of fauna  
fusion of puck and protoplasm

Of all flora,  
most akin to flesh  
as at birth, when your egglike *primordium* bursts through the *universal veil*.

Here is the naming of your parts:

*volva*

*annulus*

*hymenium*

*thallus*

Need more be said?