



Recipe Poem

Nothing says more about you than the food you choose to sustain you. You are indeed what you eat and your diet in large part determines your health and well-being. (That & attitude.) Sam Hamill three years before he died gave us some clues as to his own personal mythology when he said something that ended up as an Amerian Sentence:

4.2.2015 “Kale’s not food” says Sam whose breakfast was pastry, coffee and a smoke.

& the Washington Post says:

When you think about pairing food and books, the natural first conclusion might be cookbooks. And while cookbooks are essential to our jobs, food can also play a central role in literature. Descriptions of food fully engage the senses and can reveal character traits, serving as a conduit for both character and plot development.

Kids in Chicago wrote some cute recipe poems and the form of an actual recipe is so familiar, deviating from it for a poem has a good deal of Surprise Mind right out the gate. You could do what the kids did and write a Recipe for Growing Up (or old) or to Have a Great Summer or How to Get Smart Overnight. You could address current events by writing How To Stop a War in Gaza, or How to Stop the Anthropocene (or at least mitigate its worst effects.) That’s one way to go.

Another might be actual food. In my own work frijóles negros come up again & again. Mom did not teach me how to make them, but did turn me on to a recipe that I’ve modified and these beans show up in my poetry regularly, like in the Feb 2023 poem called *Another Day Song* (1980):

The bioregion, the soul



and the poem are involved
in this event. Without reborn
wild foxes. In a South Side
eighties loft frothing with
the discordant life
of the spirit.

Festooned with the blackness
Lorca knew as the duende.
Breathing the scent of mugwort
and sandalwood. Daígen-koh
& levothyroxine. Guatemalan coffee,
frijoles negros y birdsongs.

Dissonant free jazz & seriality.
Day songs & memories of
Imbolc ritual burnings to season

the receiving of the awesome procedure
of ancient Buddhas, like Lech Wałęsa &
Muhal Richard Abrams. Carla Bley & Joni
Mitchell. Brenda Hillman, Wanda Coleman,
Gil Scott-Heron

& all the future Buddhas
whose lives are day songs
abandoning the folly of cars
& anthropomorphism, patriarchy
& violence, human hierarchies

& billionaireism.



Chemicals y
comida basura...

WRITING EXERCISE

Write a recipe poem. Use standard recipe components like ingredients, quantities, directions, timing &c, but feel free to include asides, parenthetical thoughts, sidebars and other associations that are perfectly logical to you, but may take the reader to a place they'd never suspected they'd go. It doesn't have to be about food.

<https://wapo.st/3rZB96n>

<https://www.poetrycenter.org/how-to-write-a-recipe-poem/>

<https://allenginsberg.org/2019/01/t-j-15/>

<https://paulenelson.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Frijoles-Negros-Just-Like-Ma-Used-to-Make-.docx>

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