

Clarice Waldman

Pomme Frite

Twenty-seven years ago he had a May to June romance with the local Ronald McDonald. The delightful incompetence of young love, unveiled cartoons and hand rolled cigarettes failed him, and now that he can remember, cartoons have always been deceivers. He has never quite found love exerted in a quarter pounder with cheese sandwich with that same soft ice cream vigor. It was the way the make-up caught the red drips of ketchup and the marigold tendrils of yellow mustard that made him jump up from that dimensionless space of educator to lover. How an apple is so very sweet, the light rounds his paste colored eyes, the red lips, a beacon of grease beckoning, visit his newly remodeled playground. He ate a hundred thousand times at store #1749 in empty paper cup hopes that he might, one day, return and treat him one more time to a happy meal. Cold attestations of corn syrup, open tubs of sliced green pickles, and the ever-grand golden cow formed into milkshakes and cell phones that tweet out the intendance of assignations. Back then one could only call out to the fields of long grass, or scream to the blond brick walls for the never emergent grown ups. A dusty man arrives to close up with his silver mop and an instinctive white bucket.

Pumpkins

There are too many pumpkins in the world, too many pies and too many homestyle bakers. Too many spices and too many seeds; there is just too much of everything. Why do those farmers grow so many pumpkins? One is simply left asking, what purpose is your pumpkin? No one really cares about a single pumpkin, that is to say, unless it is your own pumpkin. Your pumpkin is the best pumpkin, even if others cannot see it as such. They are great for carving a lantern face and toast it's seeds with cumin; then one truly cares about pumpkins.

Pumpkins make the news only when they are the size of a house; when they win the gold blue ribbon at the fair; sometimes when bad pumpkins commit grizzly gangland murders; or catch the criminal on the train, solve the crime and return the jewels to their rightful owner. Farmers who grow pumpkins are an unruly bunch of rascals. They spit and curse, often over dress for casual events, steal candy, live as vegetarians, have unusual sex practices and are, in general, not nice to those people who do grow pumpkins. They buy books on pumpkins and famous pumpkin farmers and tell other pumpkin farmers of their excitements of these books and the idea of the perfect farm. Often times these are found in the form of blogs about famous pumpkin farms and famous pumpkin farmers generally with witty pumpkin titles like Jack, or Orange Patch, or Vineland Noose. These pumpkin researches often wear suits instead of overhauls and are never found in pumpkin patches, but rather, clean libraries.

Pumpkin Pie

I entered into a pumpkin pie contest a few years ago. I lost because of politics and aesthetics. My pie was a conceptual pumpkin pie; it had a crust made up of honey gingered pumpkin slices cut into the shape of the word pumpkin. Over and over again the word pumpkin went into every bite and in every mouthful was a reversal of thought and speech. The word itself inhaled with whipped cream rather than spoken on the cold October air. There was little support for the pie and I lost the contest. It did not taste like thanksgiving; an old woman jeered at me. What is wrong with you, an old man said holding onto a young girl who was crying relentlessly. I never entered another contest and plan to eat my pies in my own home. In my own private pumpkin patch with my own pumpkins and my pumpkin blog and a bowl of pumpkin seeds and I will eat to my fill. There is no other message to believe in, nothing other than my pumpkins and my pumpkins shall prevail if only in my own imaginary nation deep within my super-secret illusionland of Pumpkinvillia. There I shall dwell for hours alone with my cats and a blanket, indulging in my reverse words and idea. This is my pie, not yours. This is my pumpkin, I shall not want.

Asparagus

It became clear to me that it was time to change the inks in the cream fountain pen
After you stormed out of the house after reading the note I left for you on the fridge.
The *vert green* gave the words a tinge of something more than what I was saying, implying,
Trying to convey in that slipshod way that I do. Your poems need to bounce higher
Than they currently perform. It is as if you are dragging lilac water lines on paper towels;
Ghost tracks of what would never be written or attempted by anyone currently living.
Just try harder to see what is in front of you and then, open up your mind, your eyes and
heart and tell the nice people what you see. It is all right if you never do see, as very few
often can see properly, let alone say anything of value, with precision, in a poem. You are
not alone in your mediocrity. You ask, why bother? Well, just bother. That is it. What else is
there for a poet but to continue on poeting, making things that others may not want, but
what the hell else is there in this bland situation you find yourself? This fine apartment in the
middle of nowhere is a wonderful place to set a fire. Make the words of you and your eyes
and the light that comes between them and continue on.