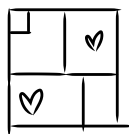




Photos by Kenny Morrison

The Hymn of Him



By Pia Z. Ehrhardt

Before the pandemic, Wednesday used to be a hump day, stuck between the gravitas of Monday & Tuesday and the approaching ease of Saturday & Sunday. Long weekends might mean a Friday bonus, another resting day. But last year, every day opened up, and weeks blurred into seven *restless* days with no place to go, nowhere to be.

Before the pandemic, I'd get antsy on Sunday nights because, come Monday, my husband, Malcolm, would be back at the office. I'd both miss him *and* be ready to have the house to myself, which made me feel guilty, but also excited.

But last year, he was home for months, and months. And then, last August, he dressed up: starched shirt, dress pants, a belt, leather shoes. I heard the jarring *clomp clomp clomp* of his steps on the floor above. He left for work. Ninety minutes zipped by and I'd done nothing with my treasured time. Except miss him! I'd become used to the all-day Malcolm, muted in soft clothes, rubber soles, taking Zoom meetings, looking in on me, but also leaving me alone to write. I'd grown accustomed to the two of us working in discreet parts of our house. We used to tease each other: how can I miss you if you don't go away? When what we

wanted was (sometimes) to get out of each other's way. The pandemic showed us where to find privacy, even stuck inside together; how to fill an empty day with shared quiet, a secular hymn.

Pia Z. Ehrhardt is the author of Famous Fathers & Other Stories and Now We Are Sixty. Her fiction and essays have appeared in Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern, Oxford American, Narrative Magazine, and Virginia Quarterly Review. Her essays have been honored as Notable in Best American Essays and Best American Sports Writing. She is the recipient of a Bread Loaf Fellowship and the Narrative Prize. She divides time between New Orleans and Queens, NY.



Tagliatelle *with Prosciutto & Butter*

We couldn't eat out, but we could cook in adventuresome ways at home. Anchovies melted in warm olive oil; raw nuts toasted and awakened by heat; corn grits silkened by cream cheese. And, thanks to this recipe which came from Evan Funke's pasta cookbook, American Sfogolino, prosciutto got treated like bacon does! Who knew?



Photo by Kenny Morrison

INGREDIENTS

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 ounces prosciutto, torn into bite-size pieces
Kosher salt and black pepper
¾ pound handmade fresh tagliatelle or
store-bought tagliatelle
½ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more
for garnish, if desired

HOW TO PREPARE

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat until frothy and golden, about 1 minute. Add half the prosciutto in one flat layer. Cook until crisp, 1 to 2 minutes, then transfer cooked prosciutto to a paper towel-lined plate. Repeat with remaining prosciutto, leaving it in the skillet, and remove skillet from heat.

Season the boiling water with salt. When the salt dissolves, add the tagliatelle and cook for 2 to 4 minutes until slightly undercooked, or according to package instructions.

Just before your pasta is ready, return the skillet to the heat and warm over medium. Do not drain the pasta, but use a slotted pasta fork or tongs and transfer the cooked pasta directly to the skillet. Working quickly, add ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano and about ¼ cup of the pasta cooking water and swirl vigorously to emulsify, jostling the pan at the same time, and cook just until sauce is silky, about 1 minute.

Divide the pasta among shallow bowls, sprinkle with pepper and remaining prosciutto along with more Parmigiano-Reggiano if desired and serve immediately.