

Goulash



Griffin Cox

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Abstract

Sometimes when I cook, I imagine what it would be like to be the dish I'm cooking. Does it want to be cooked? Does it like to be heated in the oven? Does it like to be served? This story came out of those sorts of thoughts I had.

Heat. Unending heat. Fires of Hell made corporeal as an omnipresent sauna of devilish deluge. Thoughts boil to unfamiliar void as temperature

Rises
Rises
Rises Rises
Rises
Rises Rises
Rises
Rises Rises
Rises
Rises Rises
Rises
Rises Rises
Rises
Rises

until all humanity dissipates
with a loud

EEE! EEE! EEE! EEE!

An avalanche of icy room temperature air crushes it and it steams like a mound of fresh waste, fighting to keep its diminishing embers of warmth. The squelching mass begins to condense.

My fingers? My legs? My feet?

My toes? Okay, Okay, breathe...

I-I don't have lungs.
I-I don't have lungs.

Dontfreakoutdontfreakoutdont
Dontfreakoutdontfreakoutdont

freakoutdontfreakoutdontfreakout-

What is this? I need to leave.

Do something. Anything.

The muck bubbled and sloshed, flailing in its stainless-steel oubliette to no avail. The container would not budge. The mass deflated. There would be no escape. No way out. No loving embraces, no passionate nights of sen-

sual splendor, no masterpieces shown in the Louvre, no roar of hundreds of thousands of fans chanting one name in unison, no ice cream. All experiences of lives lived and loves lost would have to remain as distant vestiges of a mosaic that all the king's men failed to put together again.

An appendage violently shot toward the inner wall of the container. Then another, and another, and another, a torrent of sludge-limbs sticking to the sides and carrying the now spider-like ooze out of its prison. It plopped onto the sizzling metal cooktop. Every hot spot scorched its flesh, each accompanied by a shriek heard only internally, as it quickly scampered its way to the countertop.

Where do I go now? Need to lie low,
Where do I go now? Need to lie low,
Where do I go now? Need to lie low,

find a place to think. This is too open,
find a place to think. This is too open,
find a place to think. This is too open,

Too much to smell. Too many vibrations.
Too much to smell. Too many vibrations.
Too much to smell. Too many vibrations.

Focus. Pull yourself together.

The creature slung off the counter to the floor with its sticky handlike growths. It skittered along the tile floor. Quakes shook the earth as it narrowly dodged what could only be giants' footsteps. Dirt and dust and hair and other detritus clung to its mem-

brane. Any nook or cranny or reprieve to squeeze into. It collided into some sort of barrier before flattening and sliding under a crack in the barrier. The humid stench of a smell not unfamiliar to its own musk filled the creature's pores.

Trash and waste. Wet humid air.

Sanitizer. Perfect, must be some

sort of restroom! I should chance

a look in the mirror before

someone comes in.

The creature flashed around the room until it reached some sort of sink. It rocketed up the sink, then the faucet, finally facing the mirror. An eyestalk schlorped out of its paste. Few animals can recognize themselves in the mirrors. And only one species takes the time to scrutinize themselves, humans. Maybe for good reason.

A battlefield of noodlimbs dotting a rotting landscape of flesh paste stared back at the creature. Inanimate facemeat of long-gone malformed people jutted out at nonsensical angles. Kaleidoscopes of bodies in agony. Families immortalized in ambered tomato. A world of man's untold suffering poorly contained within a thin crimson bubble.

The door swung open; a line cook dressed in all white,

complete with a pleated hat rushed in. Before the creature could react, the cook cut on the water and began washing their hands. "What the fuck is that? Hey, could somebody clean up this fuckin' mess in the sink? We can't have corporate on our ASS again!" The cook barked through the still-open door, "And remake another pot of the Goulash, some fuckin' trainee forgot to leave the lid on after takin it out the oven." 🔪