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how to become a starving artist,
or at least eat like one

VOLUME 1

StudioHotplate

“Art. Food. Whatever.”

What are people are saying about **“How to Become a Starving Artist, or at Least Eat Like One – Volume 1”**?

“The food is delicious, and your artwork is interesting. Now we just have to do something about that beard, and your appalling taste in women.” – Ed’s Mom

“You should be proud of yourself, Ed. The book is, wonderful, especially it’s wit. That said, if you don’t start taking our sessions more seriously, I’m afraid I’ll have to stop seeing you.” – Ed’s Therapist

“I don’t care if you’re a hotshot blogger, or artist, or whatever you call yourself. If you don’t get this food to table 6 pronto, you’ll be an unemployed blogging artist.” – Ed’s Boss

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If you find the little book useful, interesting, or just plain cool, please consider making a small donation to help in the development of **“How to Become a Starving Artist, or at Least Eat Like One – Volume 2”**



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Ed Jasek
explains:

how to become a starving artist,
or at least eat like one

VOLUME 1

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The Lavabo

WASHING OF THE CELEBRANT'S HANDS



at solemn
had d

introduction

Educated as a printmaker, I bailed on my craft right out of college when I accepted a “real job”, diving head-first into a 20-year career in the web and technology industries. Big mistake. Now, freed from the near-daily beating of life as a designer and technologist, I’ve reconnected with my art while starting to rebuild the scrap heap I once called my life.

But what good is the new found freedom of an artist’s life without a little decadence? Within limits. My vice – short of psychotherapy, late nights at the studio, and a little too much wine to stoke the creative coals – has become food. Experiments on the hotplate are almost as satisfying as pulling a solid print off the board. I’m painting recipes at the studio, most of them delicious, and I’d love to share them with you.

Believe it or not, every recipe in this book was prepared in a warehouse studio using only a hotplate, a toaster oven, or a crockpot, mainly as a distraction while paint dried. Literally. An artist needs a distraction – beyond wine and questionable decisions – to fill the time while a newly stretched sheet of paper settles into place, or a fresh brushstroke slowly dries. If a starving artist with no formal culinary training can manage these tasty dishes in a rundown warehouse, you’ll have no problem in the comfort of your lovely kitchen.

So jump right in, revel in your kitchen, and take a little pleasure from these simple and hopefully delicious dishes.

Ed Jasek

Artist, Blogger, Trainwreck

Previous page:

Ed Jasek, *The Lavabo* (detail),
2013, mixed media on paper

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...

*I almost sliced off my finger cutting some
celery for a healthy snack and all I could think
was, "This never happens with cupcakes."*

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...

I'm an artist who waits tables to pay the bills, so I don't have “weekends” or “holidays” or “savings”, but I do have “wine”, so things are looking up.

how to become a starving artist: tip #1

deny your dreams

First, deny your talent, dreams, and hopes, then spend the first few years of college pursuing a “real” degree. A serious degree with real-world prospects. Business. Advertising. Marketing. Perhaps Political Science. Any degree but Fine Art, Art History, or the very appealing but poorly understood practice of Print-making. This will make your parents happy – at least for the first year or two.

DO NOT lose hope! You have just begun an interesting two-decade long journey. Slowly but surely, you’ll begin to feel disillusioned with your life choices. Again, **DO NOT** worry. This is a perfectly normal beginning to the self-questioning insecurity that will one day inspire artwork that **WILL NOT** sell.

CONGRATULATIONS! You’ve taken the first step on a path that will eventually lead to the romantic life of a starving artist.

...

Following page:

Ed Jasek, *Reasonably Convincing Proof of Concept, No. 1* (detail),
2013, mixed media on paper



8 **banana oatmeal breakfast bake**



Outside of the rare vacation, the starving artist has never been much of a breakfast guy. For the most part I drink my breakfast, and prefer it as black as my mood. I need my ramp-up time, and coffee has always met me halfway. It's a cozy pick me up that requires almost no effort. However, my morning mood has lifted lately, so I've begun experimenting with low maintenance breakfasts. For instance, this delicious Banana Oatmeal Breakfast Bake. I made it on a Sunday afternoon, cut it into individual servings I keep in the fridge, and now I pop a serving in the toaster oven when I put on my morning coffee. By the time that delicious cup of motivation is ready, I'm pulling a warm slice of goodness from the oven. A hot, delicious breakfast that doesn't impact my ramp-up time. I can work with that.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup banana, mashed
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°, and coat an 8" square baking dish with butter.

Start by adding the oats, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt to a medium bowl and stir to combine.

In another large bowl, whisk together the milk, banana, egg, and vanilla. Slowly pour in the melted butter, whisking constantly.

Now add the oat mixture into the wet ingredients and stir to combine. Transfer to the buttered baking dish and bake for 25 minutes. Meanwhile, put the chopped walnuts on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for 5 minutes. Sprinkle the toasted walnuts on top of the oatmeal and cool slightly before serving. Top with a few banana slices if you're feeling decadent.

...

*I hate it when I get all the way to work
before I realize I left my will to live at home.*



Life as a starving artist is pretty simple once you accept one basic principal: Life is nothing more than an endless cascade of questionable decisions slowly snowballing into a perplexing mix of anxiety and adventure. For instance, a wine filled all-nighter working on a print when you know you'll be waiting tables for a party of 40 the next morning. Or pulling the trigger on a new commercial grade food processor when you're not quite sure you can even pay the rent. Or trying to make jam out of bacon. That's right – jam out of bacon. Whenever I wake up to the morning after, or when I have no time or energy to make a decent breakfast before I'm sucked into a world complicated by my poorly considered decisions, I can at least enjoy the flavor of bacon and toast with this amazing jam. Now you can too.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound of bacon, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup brewed coffee
(the stronger the better)

DIRECTIONS

In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium-high until just starting to brown and crisp at edges, about 15-20 minutes. Remove cooked bacon to a paper towel-lined plate to cool and drain off grease. Dab with paper towels to remove the excess grease.

Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of bacon fat from the skillet. Turn the heat down to medium-low, add the onions and garlic, and cook until onions are translucent, about 5 minutes or so.

Next, add the vinegar, brown sugar, maple syrup, and coffee to the skillet. Bring to a boil, then add the bacon back into the mix. Lower the heat under the skillet until barely simmering, then cook uncovered for 60-90 minutes, stirring every 5-10 minutes to keep the sugar in the mix from burning. You'll know it's ready when you've become impatient with the process, most of the liquid has evaporated, and what remains is nice and syrupy.

Once most of the moisture has evaporated away and you have a nice syrupy mixture, remove the skillet from the heat and let everything cool for a few minutes, then transfer the jam to a food processor. Pulse until you get the consistency of a good, chunky jam.

Serve on toast, bagels, or if you're open to one of the starving artist's more adventurous decisions, spread some on a cheeseburger. Wow.

12 how to become a starving artist: tip #2.1 college, motorcycles, romance, and the harvard comma

In our previous tip, we explored the value of denying your talent, dreams, and hopes when taking your first steps towards becoming a starving artist, but for the sake of old-school serialized drama, we strategically chose to not ponder why. Today, we'll begin to ponder. Welcome to "Tip #2 - Part 1: College, Motorcycles, Romance, and the Harvard Comma".

College can be confusing. One day you're a tentative Political Science major working studiously towards **NOT** being an Art major, the next day you're squandering some of your Pell Grant to buy a secondhand motorcycle from an old high school buddy. Somewhere in the back of your mind, a future starving artist believes this is a good idea, so you go with it. In the short term, you're correct.

College girls dig motorcycles. Starving artists? Not so much. Good thing you're a Political Science major projecting a successful future, and better yet, one with a quirky creative bent. Quirky gets the girls, and soon you'll stumble upon a doozy...

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Following page:
Ed Jasek, *Supersonic* (detail),
2013, mixed media on paper

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My colon may never recover. Not exactly the most appetizing opening line, so let me explain. After 40 meat-free days of Lent, some might say my rebound diet has been a little excessive. For the past week, I've dined on every conceivable form of meat. Steak, pot roast, pork chops, chorizo, hot dogs, jerky. You name it, I squeezed it into a meal or snack. It's been such gluttony, any spiritual or physical benefit I received from that 40-day fast is surely a thing of the past. I'm a fallen man, and I've loved every bite of the fall. Especially these Lazy Open-Faced Oven Burgers. Who knows how the leftovers will reheat, but the first three were delicious.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 & 1/2 pounds of lean ground beef
- 3 small-ish ciabatta rolls, sliced in half
- Worcestershire sauce
- Onion salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Unsalted butter
- 6 slices Cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper, place your oven's baking rack in the middle position, and preheat your oven to broil.

While your oven comes to temperature, place the ciabatta rolls face up on the baking sheet, divide the ground beef into 6 equal portions, pat them flat, then place a patty on each ciabatta roll.

Next – and this is a long sentence – score the top of each burger, criss-crossing it like a hashtag or tic-tac-toe board, drizzle a little Worcestershire sauce onto each patty, season each with onion salt and pepper, then top each patty with a pat of butter.

Now, place your burger laden baking sheet in the oven and broil for 10 minutes for medium rare, or longer if you prefer a more well done burger.

Once the burgers are cooked your standards, add a slice of cheese to each burger and cook for 1-2 minutes more until the cheese has melted. Remove from the oven and serve immediately.

...

Jesus may have turned water into wine, but I've turned wine into regrettable text messages.



The weather in Texas is a bigger tease than a high school cheerleader girlfriend. It's officially been fall for weeks, but the weather keeps leading me on. I woke up Saturday morning to a beautiful 59°, and immediately made a beeline for the farmers market, where I found a half-dozen of what may be the last locally grown bell peppers 'til the calendar turns to spring. I also sweated my butt off, as by 11:00 a.m. the temperature was creeping past 95°. Sometimes I don't believe fall exists in Texas, but I do believe in stuffed bell peppers. I also believe you'll love this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean ground beef, 90% lean
- 4 mushrooms, chopped
- 3 ears of fresh corn kernels
- 2 ribs of celery, chopped thinly
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 14.5 ounce cans petite diced tomatoes, with juice
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons basil
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 & 1/2 cups cooked long grain rice
- 1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 6 bell peppers
- 1 cup shredded fontina or monterey jack cheese

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°.

Cut the tops from the bell peppers, and clean out the seeds and inner ribs.

Place the peppers in a large pot of boiling water, and cook uncovered for about 5 minutes. Using tongs, remove and place on a cooling rack upside down to drain and cool. Once cool enough to handle, sprinkle the inside of each pepper lightly with salt.

While your peppers cool, brown the ground beef in a large skillet over medium high heat for 5 minutes, or until cooked almost through, then add the mushrooms, corn kernels, chopped celery onion, and garlic. Cook until vegetables are softened.

Next, stir in the diced tomatoes, tomato paste, basil, oregano, and red pepper flakes. Season with kosher salt and ground pepper to taste. Cook for 15-20 minutes.

Now, stir in the cooked rice and chopped parsley, then cook for another 5 minutes, or until the rice is warmed through.

Transfer your peppers to a baking dish, and fill the peppers with the hot meat and rice mixture. Sprinkle the tops with cheese, then bake for 20 minutes, or until peppers are tender and cheese is browned. Serve hot.

...

Tired of healthy relationships? Fed up with making investment decisions? Wonder what it's like to disappoint your parents? Maybe it's time you became an artist!

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As the heat of another Texas summer reaches its peak, I lean towards activities that feature air-conditioning. Actually, I sprint towards them. One of my favorites is bargain hunting for new cookware. Department stores are remarkably well air-conditioned, so the hotter it gets outside, the more likely you'll find me prowling the aisles at Marshalls or Tuesday Morning, rooting through shelves and bins, looking for a steal on a new kitchen gadget. And boy howdy, did I find a doozie the other day! A 15" Lodge Cast Iron Skillet for a measly \$19.00. I quickly pried it from the hands of a pregnant single-mother of three, rushed to the checkout to seal the deal, then sprinted for the air-conditioned comfort of my truck, where I immediately began planning this delicious batch of Caramelized Chicken Thighs.

MAIN INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound chicken thighs with skin, deboned
- 2 tablespoons safflower oil, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 jalapeño, sliced

MARINADE INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- Black pepper

CARAMEL SAUCE INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/2 tablespoon sugar
- 3 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, mix together the marinade, coat the chicken, and marinate for 10-15 minutes.

While the chicken marinates, mix together the caramel sauce in a small bowl, then set aside.

Next, heat a cast-iron skillet on medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon safflower oil. Pan-fry the chicken skin side up until the bottom turns slightly crispy and brown. Repeat the same for the other side, until the skin becomes slightly charred. Transfer the chicken to a plate.

Add the other 1 tablespoon safflower oil into the skillet and add the garlic. Add the chicken into the pan, and then pour in the caramel sauce. Lower the heat to simmer and continue to cook until the caramel sauce reduces, thickens, and becomes amber in color. Turn the chicken a couple of times during cooking.

Finally, add the jalapeño and cook for 1-2 minutes to soften the peppers a bit. Serve immediately with steamed rice.

20 how to become a starving artist: tip #2.2 college, motorcycles, romance, and the harvard comma

When we last checked in with “How to Become a Starving Artist”, our anti-hero was deep in the saddle of a Pell Grant funded iron horse, cruising the romantic back roads of greater Denton County as the sun begins to set, a cute little coed cozied up on the back of his bike, arms wrapped around him, chin tucked over his shoulder, her warm breath... crap! Was that a possum?

Let me catch my breath. This motorcycle thing is dangerous. OK. I’m good.

Alright, back to “Tip #2: College, Motorcycles, Romance, and the Harvard Comma - Part 2”. This week – romance. We’ll get to the Harvard comma later.

Flash forward. First date. Feeling pretty cool. Sitting on the curb outside the Flying Tomato, as the now somewhat battered two-wheeler casts its shadow upon the date and I. Having splurged on an ice cold quart of Miller Lite, I offer her a sip. She accepts. The good news is her eye patch is off. The bad news is I’m now an Art major. An Art major falling for a girl with an eye patch. A girl who’s cool with a beer – on the curb – on a first date. Seriously. This night will soon give birth to true love, and a 25-year roller coaster ride whip-lashing towards starving artist-hood is about to take flight. But tonight, well, let’s hold on to tonight.

Tune in next week, when we’ll explore “the Harvard comma”.

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Following page:
Ed Jasek, *Untitled* (detail), 2013,
mixed media on paper

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The Catholic Church refers to this time of year as Lent, but I've begun calling it "40 Days of Pasta". This year I gave up meat for Lent, and since I'm not a big fan of seafood, pasta is about all I have left. Over the past month or so, I've eaten spaghetti, fettuccini, fusilli, macaroni, cannelloni, manicotti, and in keeping with the spirit of the season, angel hair pasta and capellini del prete, which translates to "priest's hats". Today I made an especially delicious – and hopefully final – pasta dish. I can hardly wait to dig into a big ol' steak or even a simple hotdog, but this will do until Easter Sunday and a leg of lamb arrives, I'll settle for this amazing Three Cheese Stuffed Pasta.

INGREDIENTS

- 20 uncooked jumbo pasta shells
- 15 ounces ricotta cheese
- 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 12 basil leaves, chiffonade
- 1 egg
- Pasta sauce (26 ounces homemade or storebought jar)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat your oven to 350°. Cook the pasta shells according to package directions for al dente, usually about 9 minutes. Drain, rinse in cold water, then set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the ricotta, parmesan, 1 & 1/2 cups of the mozzarella, egg, salt, pepper, and basil.

Now, spread 3/4 of the pasta sauce on the bottom of a 13x9 baking dish.

Finally, spoon the cheese mixture into the pasta shells and place in the baking dish. Pour the remaining pasta sauce over the shells and sprinkle with the rest of the mozzarella. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for 5-10 minutes more.

...

*My shrink said she would quit seeing me
unless I stop using puns to deflect real
emotions, but I think she's just therapissed.*



According to the Catholic Church, it's perfectly acceptable for someone abstaining from meat to eat fish. But why would I, especially when there's comfort food galore to offset of my seasonal sacrifice? Like this amazingly creamy macaroni and cheese. No, this was not a side. This was dinner. And given the spirit of the season, I have a confession to make. I made two batches. But don't worry, I left just enough of the first batch to avoid the sin of gluttony. The other batch went straight to the fridge. It's gonna be a good week for leftovers.

PANKO TOPPING INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese

MAC & CHEESE INGREDIENTS

- 11 ounces cavatappi or elbow macaroni
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 & 1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard powder
- 2 & 1/2 cups freshly shredded cheddar
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese

Start by making your panko topping. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat, when the butter starts to bubble, add the panko and toast for 4-7 minutes or until it just starts to brown. Remove from the stove, then combine the toasted panko in a small bowl with the salt, garlic powder, and parmesan cheese. Set aside.

Now on to the mac & cheese. To start, position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 400°. Grease a medium baking dish, then set it aside.

While the oven warms up, prepare the macaroni according to package directions, minus 1-2 minutes from al dente. The macaroni will cook a bit more when it goes into the cheese sauce so you don't want it cooked all the way through. Drain, and set aside.

Next, set a medium dutch oven over medium heat, add the butter, allow it to melt, then add the flour. Allow the flour to cook for about 1 minute, then add the garlic powder and onion powder,

and cook for an additional 30 seconds, or until you can smell the mixture.

Now, whisk in the milk. Allow the milk to thicken, about 8-10 minutes. It should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon without dripping too much. Wipe the spoon with your finger, and if the sauce stays separated, it's done. Remove from the heat and stir in the parmesan and cheddar cheeses immediately.

Add the prepared macaroni and stir to combine. Dump the pasta into the prepared baking dish, top with the panko crumbs, and you're almost there.

Bake for 8 minutes, uncovered. Keep an eye on the dish so the panko topping does not burn. Serve warm.

...

*Can anyone recommend a wine that
pairs well with low expectations?*

newcastle risotto with sausage & gouda



Things are looking up. Waco enjoyed a few brief hours of sunshine before the heavens reopened with another Genesis-like deluge, but that little sunshiny window had my spirits rising rapidly. So fast in fact, I scrapped my trip to the grocery, uncorked a nice bottle of Chardonnay, and jumped head first into a brand new print. It felt great – until I got hungry and remembered the fridge was practically bare. Luckily, the creative juices were flowing, so I used ‘em to gin up a delicious risotto from refrigerator scraps. Sorry, there’s no real gin in this recipe. But there is a little hope, a little beer, and a ton of flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 ounces spicy Italian sausage, sliced
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 12 ounces Newcastle Brown Ale (room temperature)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup grated Gouda cheese
- Salt and pepper
- Chopped parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Start by warming the chicken stock in a medium sauce pan over low heat, then keep it that way.

Next, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat, then add the sliced sausage and sauté until browned, about 3-5 minutes. Remove the sausage and set aside, then add the chopped onion and garlic to the same pan. Sauté until translucent, about another 3-5 minutes, then add the rice and sauté for another couple of minutes, until you smell a slightly nutty aroma.

Now, add half the beer and stir until it's fully absorbed. Add the remaining beer and continue stirring until it's fully absorbed. Add a ladle of the chicken stock and cook until it's fully absorbed, stirring frequently. Continue adding the chicken stock in small doses each time the rice appears almost dry. Cook until the rice appears creamy and is al dente, about 20-30 minutes total.

Finally, stir in 1 tablespoon of butter and the grated gouda cheese, then stir the sausages into the rice. Season with salt and pepper, garnish with chopped parsley, then dig in.

...

*Yes, I know risotto isn't pasta, but
it's delicious – so just go with it.*

28 how to become a starving artist: tip #2.3

college, motorcycles, romance, and the harvard comma

It's been a while since our last conversation on "How to Become a Starving Artist", but that's the nature of starving artist-hood. Often, the creativity or motivation just isn't there, so instead of being productive, you just hang around the studio late into the night, drinking a little too much wine, and arm wrestling over weighty issues with a fellow artist or two. Issues like lost love, religion and its place in modern society, or the family tree of heavy metal and Black Sabbath's position on said tree. Like I said, weighty issues. And speaking of weighty issues, let's turn to "Tip #2: College, Motorcycles, Romance, and the Harvard Comma - Part 3", where as promised, we'll finally take a look at the Harvard comma.

First, what exactly is the Harvard comma?

According to Wikipedia.com (with a few edits made to better relate to life in the studio):

"In English punctuation, the Harvard comma (also called the serial comma) is a comma placed immediately before the coordinating conjunction (usually and, or, or nor) in a series of three or more terms. For example, a list of three tasty beverages might be punctuated either as "beer, wine, and vodka" (with the Harvard comma), or as "beer, wine and vodka" (without the Harvard comma). Opinions among writers and editors differ on whether to use the Harvard comma. Some argue that it's use diminishes the importance and value of the last term in the sentence when considered along with the previous terms, whereas others argue that it places undue importance on the final term. Still others say it has no effect on emphasis whatsoever."

An interesting and esoteric debate, but one in which I can easily take a side.

“You can have a real career where you’ll be professional, successful, well paid, **AND** still have time for your art”, said the now permanently eye patch-free love of my life.

At first, I bought into the simplest understanding of the previous sentence, but eventually reality encroached. It took years as a graphic designer, web developer, and team leader at a number of tech companies - successful as I became - to realize that the “**AND**”, combined with the harvard comma in the above sentiment, “*diminishes the importance and value of the last term in the sentence when considered along with the previous terms.*”

For nearly twenty years, I never found the time for art.

“Professional, successful, and well paid” took up most of my days, leaving little time for personal creativity, and the lack of art in my life eventually began to eat away at my ability to maintain a healthy relationship with myself, and my eyepatch-free love.

Whoa! That’s more than enough of the grammar lessons and self-examination for today. Let’s calm down, and get back to the “beer, wine, and vodka.”

...

I just did some quick, back-of-the-napkin math, and it appears my Netflix queue is longer than my projected lifespan.

slow cooker adobo pulled chicken



I think I've admitted this before, but in case you've forgotten, the Starving Artist can be remarkably lazy. Sure, I may rise at the crack of dawn, suggesting a veneer of self-discipline, but the truth is I don't sleep well, so I might as well get out of bed. And yes, I do cook dinner almost every night, but don't let that fool you. I'm simply too lazy to nail down a job that pays a decent wage, so eating at home is a matter of economics. This is why I appreciate the crockpot. It works at my pace, and if used thoughtfully – after all, thinking is the lazy man's labor – a few hours worth of attention-free cooking can provide a full week of dinners. For instance, I recently whipped up a batch of Crockpot Adobo Pulled Chicken, which as the week progressed, morphed from a Pulled Adobo Chicken Sandwich topped with cole slaw, into an Adobo Chicken Rice Bowl with sautéed veggies, and finally finished life as Adobo Chicken Hand Pies. If you're keeping score, that's one artist, a chicken, and a week's worth of tasty dishes.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 3.5-ounce can of chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped, sauce included
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

This is super simple. Place the chicken breasts in your slow cooker, then add the rest of the ingredients on top. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours, or on high for 4 hours. Drink a nice bottle of wine while you're waiting.

When ready, remove the chicken from the slow cooker. Using two forks, shred the chicken, then stir the chicken back into the sauce in the slow cooker. Cover and cook for another 30 minutes. Soon, you've got some delicious Shredded Adobo Chicken.

NOTES

Now, what are you gonna do with it? I have a few suggestions. When it's super fresh and hot from the slow cooker, I like to go with the Pulled Adobo Chicken Sandwich. I like this sandwich topped with cole slaw, but pickles and onions work nicely as well.

As the week goes on, I'll whip up an Adobo Chicken Rice Bowl. Just steam yourself a little rice, sauté some of your favorite vegetables, then top everything off with a bit of reheated Pulled Adobo Chicken.

Finally, as the week comes to an end, I'll make a few hand pies, and wrap things up with a handful of pastry heaven.

...

*Today I'm feeling lazier than the
guy who named the White House.*

cranberry sriracha baby back ribs



Occasionally the glamorous life of the starving artist turns out to be less than it's cracked up to be. Sure, there's the mystique of the warehouse loft in a questionable neighborhood. And don't forget about the allure of sacrificing for one's art when there's no heat at the studio. The ladies love a man who gives his all in the pursuit of a dream. Then reality kicks in. Literally. Last night the starving artist arrived to find the front door kicked in, and most of his meager possessions gone. Luckily the thieves weren't art fans, and only took the electronics and the wine. The wine! Anyhow, coping requires some low-effort comfort food. And since the burglars must have already owned a crockpot, I'm using mine to make Cranberry Sriracha Baby Back Ribs. I guess the weekend isn't a total loss.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 & 1/2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 can (12-ounces) jellied cranberry sauce
- 1 bottle (14-ounces) Heinz Sriracha Ketchup
- 4 pounds of baby back ribs
- 1 cup water

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, mix together the paprika, garlic powder, salt and pepper and set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the Heinz Sriracha Ketchup and cranberry sauce until smooth. Remove 1 cup of the sauce and set it aside.

Remove the ribs from the package and pat dry, and set them meaty-side-up on a cutting board. Cut the rack into 3-4 rib sections. Sprinkle the dry spice mixture onto the meaty side of the ribs and press to adhere to the meat.

Pour the water into the bottom of the slow cooker.

Spread the sauce generously onto both sides of the ribs. Set the ribs into the slow cooker.

Cook on high heat for 3 1/2 hours.

Remove the ribs to a baking sheet (the meaty-side-up). Preheat your oven broiler. Brush the remaining 1 cup of sauce onto the meaty side of the ribs. Broil for 3 to 5 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbling. Serve immediately.

...

My graying hair says “distinguished gentleman of means”, but the Cheetos crumbs in my beard scream “lives in a van down by the river”.

rainy day crockpot sloppy joes



I'm at my best on a cold, crisp, winter's day. The chill sparks my creative energy, and I look damn good in my favorite sweater. Unfortunately, the process of getting there wears on me. Today is a perfect example. It's a cloudy, rainy, 66° October Sunday. Nowhere near a winter's day. And I haven't seen the sun for days, which has me deep in the doldrums. As a result, I'm too unmotivated to cook much of anything. Luckily I have a solution. Sloppy Joes. The ultimate comfort food. Today's approach calls for 10 minutes of actual work, then 5 hours in the crockpot. The perfect excuse for an afternoon nap, followed by several days worth of sandwiches on the couch in my pajamas, waiting for the year's first cold, crisp, winter's day to arrive – along with my motivation.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds of lean ground beef
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 & 1/4 cups Heinz Sriracha ketchup
(basically a 14-ounce bottle)
- 1 & 1/2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 1 & 1/2 tablespoons brown sugar

DIRECTIONS

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, brown your ground beef. Once browned, drain away any excess fat, then put the ground beef into your crock pot.

Next, grab a mixing bowl and combine all other ingredients. Mix until everything is well combined, then pour over the ground beef and mix well.

Finally, set the crock pot on low, and cook for 5 hours.
(This is where I take a nap.)

Once finished, stir a bit, then serve on toasted hamburger buns.

...

*I'm not always depressed.
Sometimes I'm sleeping.*

Once again, it's been a while since we last discussed "How to Become a Starving Artist", and a big reason why is my annual November/December obsession with defining a motto to guide me through the upcoming year. Everyone benefits from a goal, and the starving artist is no different.

A motto is a bit different from a resolution. Rather than an objective to be accomplished, the motto is instead a philosophy to guide one down the unfolding path of the year ahead. For me, a good motto is subtly subversive and somewhat self-deprecating. Additionally, it sets a low bar, as the starving artist is generally too lazy and unfocused to keep to a complicated path.

To help illustrate the beauty and value of the motto, here are a few classics from the past:

2017: "80% of everything is crap."

2018: "The future was yesterday."

2020: "Don't trip over the rainbow."

2021: "You can't get there from here."

2023: "Just show up."

So, now that you have a better understanding of what makes a good motto, and have contemplated a few of the oldies but goodies, it's time to announce this year's winner...

2025: "Let's run off and join the circus."

"Ed?", you're thinking. "That's kinda weird, and what the hell does it even mean?"

Well, to me it means take risks. At some point in life, most of us give a fleeting thought to running away. To risking everything on a dream, even though it's doomed to fail. Like running off to join the circus. Did that ever really work out for anyone? Probably not, but the dream was worth dreaming. And every once in a while the risk pays off, the dream comes true, and life is a little more satisfying.

...

Following page:

Ed Jasek, *Just Drive, She Said* (detail),
2013, mixed media on paper

TEXAS



chipotle refried bean smash burger



For the longest time, the studio had neither heat nor air-conditioning, so spring and fall were the standard windows for comfortable creativity. Eventually we managed A/C – and extended the comfort into summer – but winter is still a challenge. The breakers barely support more than one space heater at a time, and the windows are drafty and spew cold air into the loft, so that's where the hotplates come in. They barely pull more than a couple of amps, but I can warm my hands while cooking this amazing pan fried Chipotle Refried Bean Smash Burger – all without worrying about throwing a breaker. Comfort is all about the little things.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons adobo sauce, from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce
- 1 pound ground beef chuck
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil
- Warm refried beans
- Your favorite lettuce
- Fresh cilantro
- Very thinly sliced tomato
- 1 avocado, mashed
- Shredded Queso Oaxaca
- Hamburger buns

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise and 2 tablespoons of adobo sauce. Set aside. For a spicier sauce, mince a couple of chipotle peppers and mix into the mayo sauce.

Season your hamburger patties with salt and pepper, then add the patties to a cast iron skillet that has been preheated over medium-high heat with with a tablespoon or two of oil. Using a stiff spatula, smash your patties thin. Cook for 2-3 minutes per side for a delicious medium rare burger. I look for a little crunchiness to appear on the burger edges to let me know they're ready. Transfer to a plate and allow to rest for a couple of minutes while you toast your buns.

Now, toast the buns on your skillet..

Next, spread some warm refried beans on the bottom half of your bun, top with lettuce, fresh cilantro leaves, tomato, and a hamburger patty. Top with a little mashed avocado, then top that with shredded queso. Finally, spread some chipotle mayonnaise on the top bun, close your burger, and dig in.

...

In case you were wondering, a group of monkeys is called a "troop", a group of whales is called a "pod", and a group of mistakes is called a "life".

Flashback to 1991. May is just around the corner, followed closely by the end of my college career. Though it will eventually come as a surprise to me, I'm experiencing my best days as an artist for the next two decades, and I'm barely approaching my mid-twenties. Currently, my attention is focused on Sunday's washer tournament, and reclaiming the "Golden Washer" I lost last weekend in a tight championship match with August. He claimed it on the last pitch, and it broke my heart to hang that trophy around his neck, especially after I'd worn it three Sundays in a row. There's no way I'm leaving college without that damned washer.

It's funny how easily we take pleasure in the smallest of things when we're young, and sad how easily we lose sight of those things as we "grow" older, take on "real world" responsibilities, and find ourselves swamped with the stresses that come with marriage, a mortgage, kids, animals, and "keeping up with the Joneses."

Ah... but here's one of the little known benefits of life as a starving artist. When the wallet and the belly are empty, all you have left are the little things. And it's surprising how much meaning – and satisfaction – you can find in those little things. In fact, I think in the next day or two, I'll make time to build a washer pit in the backyard. After 20 years, I'm good and ready to resurrect a simple and satisfying Sunday afternoon tradition. Plus, I desperately need to wear that golden washer again.

...

Following page:

Ed Jasek, *Unconsummated Love Potion, No. 2*
(detail), 2015, mixed media on paper

studio  hotplate™
Art. Food. Whatever.





Hallelujah! Lent is over, Spring Training is winding down, Opening Day is barely a week away, and once again I can fill my pie hole with meat! The problem is, after 40 days of hopeful, soul saving self-sacrifice, my meat inventory is severely depleted. Luckily I found a package of hot dogs tucked in the back corner of the freezer. Add to that a few slices of French bread left over from a failed attempt at Lent friendly single-serve Margherita pizzas, and I've got an idea to satisfy my repressed 40-day cravings. The Spring Training Grilled Cheese Sandwich. One bite into this, and the only thing that might taste better is a Texas Rangers World Series victory. But that's just crazy, right?

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices of French bread
- 1 hot dog
- 1/2 cup grated cheese
(I used Havarti & Cheddar)
- 2 tablespoons of diced pickles or relish
- 1 slice of white onion
- Ketchup & mustard

DIRECTIONS

Put two pans over medium heat. Toss a chunk of butter into one, add your onion, and cook until caramelized. In the other pan fry your hot dog until cooked, then slice into three long pieces.

Next, butter the outside of each slice of bread, then spread ketchup on the bottom slice, top with relish or diced pickles, sprinkle on the Havarti cheese, layer on the hot dog slices, then the caramelized onions, and finish with Cheddar cheese. Spread the mustard on the inside of the top slice of bread, close up your sandwich, then fry in a covered pan until golden brown on each side.

...

*Yesterday I almost offered a coworker advice,
but then I remembered I'm a walking, talking
mess held together by little more than wine
and psychotherapy.*

grilled mac & cheese sandwich



If you've followed StudioHotplate for more than a few months, you may have figured out that the Starving Artist has three key obsessions. Comfort food, leftovers, and a never ending pursuit for the perfect grilled cheese sandwich. Well, this week, comfort food and leftovers collided in the search for grilled cheese perfection. The search will still be long, and most assuredly delicious, but I will persevere. Introducing the Grilled Mac & Cheese Sandwich.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices of French bread
- 1 cup leftover macaroni & cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Panko bread crumbs
- Butter
- Mayonnaise
- Salt & pepper

DIRECTIONS

Place a cast iron or nonstick skillet over medium heat and add a pat of butter.

While your skillet is heating, grab a small bowl and mix together your leftover macaroni & cheese, about 2 tablespoons of panko crumbs, a couple pinches of cheddar cheese, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well, form into patties, then place in your heated skillet. Cook until golden brown on each side.

Now, while the macaroni & cheese patties cook, prepare the rest of your sandwich. Spread a generous amount of mayonnaise on the outside of both slices of bread, dip into a plate with Panko crumbs and press each slice into the crumbs to crust the sandwich.

Next, place about half of the shredded cheddar cheese on the bottom slice of your sandwich. Once your macaroni & cheese patties are cooked, add them on top of cheese, then top with more cheese, and then other slice of bread. Close up your sandwich, add it to your skillet, and cook until golden brown on each side - a pressing on your sandwich occasionally to ensure the whole thing sticks together. Cut in half, and enjoy another near-perfect grilled cheese sandwich.

...

I'm like a fine wine. I've gotten better with age, and people use words like "dense" and "full-bodied" to describe me.

“the warhol” grilled cheese sandwich



“Necessity is the mother of invention.” We’ve all heard this famous quote, but I think it misses the mark a bit. In the studio, “desperation” is the mother of invention, especially at 3:00 a.m. Last night I spent so much time obsessing over a print that I was grossly unprepared when the wine ran out and the hunger pangs kicked in. A frantic search of the cupboard found the following ingredients: half a loaf of French bread, a can of Campbell’s tomato soup, a block of cheddar cheese, and mayonnaise. The cupboard truly was bare. Thus my desperation – and my Pop Art inspiration. Introducing “The Warhol” Grilled Cheese Sandwich.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices of French bread
- 2-4 tablespoons Campbell's Tomato Soup
(straight from the can)
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Mayonnaise

DIRECTIONS

Warm a cast iron skillet over medium heat.

While your skillet comes to temperature, take 2 slices of French bread and spread enough tomato soup – straight from the can – to cover the inside of each slice, add your cheddar cheese, then close your sandwich.

Next, spread a little mayonnaise on each side of your sandwich, then place in your skillet. Grill until golden brown on each side – about 2 minutes per side. I like to cover the skillet to help melt the cheese.

Cut your sandwich in half and dig in.

...

*I clearly offer way too much advice for
someone whose life revolves around
wine and psychotherapy.*

One universally recognized trait of the starving artist is depression, or in my preferred parlance, melancholy. Truthfully, melancholy is the perfect word. It captures the “sweet sadness” of life, and the quiet contemplation of feelings and experience modern society tells us is best to ignore. Melancholy is how I cope. How I find meaning. How I find direction. How I find my way back after a lousy day. Or week. Or month.

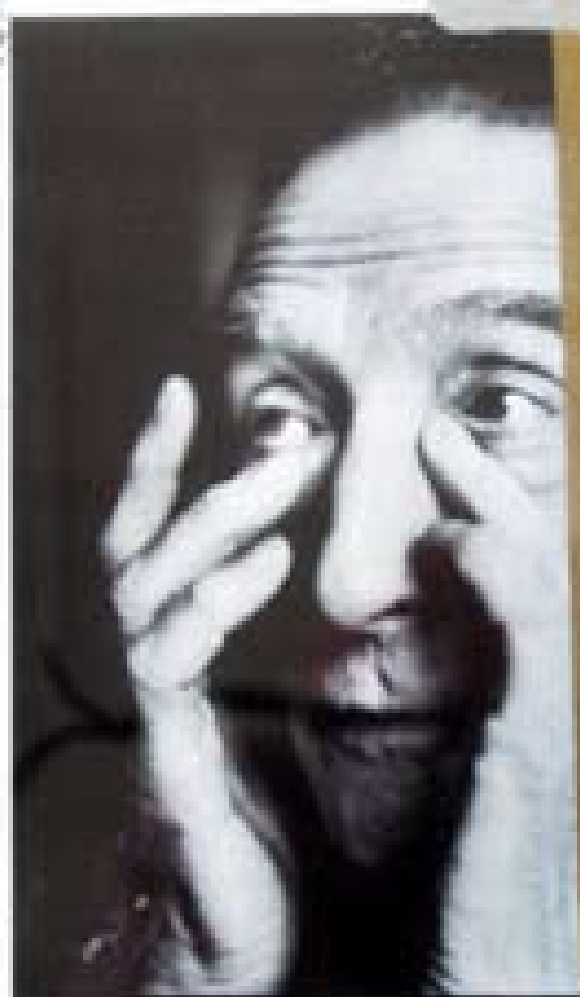
Without sadness, how do you measure joy? Until you fail, how do you gauge success? The big celebratory events in life are few and far between, so finding contentment in the little things is a must. The quiet satisfaction of the perfect brushstroke. The simple wonder of a well stretched canvas. Even a lesson learned from a work that doesn't measure up can bring light to an otherwise uneventful day.

Sure, I'm overthinking things, but that's the starving artist in me, and that's what helps make life meaningful. And I'll let you in on another little secret. Most days are unremarkable, and the content of your day is not a reflection of the content of your character.

Think about it. I do. All. The. Time.

...

Following page:
Ed Jasek, *Untitled*, 2001,
mixed media on paper



EDMUND REPRESENTED EXCLUSIVELY BY PHAENOM GALL

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Has anyone ever turned 50 and not found themselves shocked by the sunlight and nursing a hangover the next morning? If so, why didn't you tip me off to your approach before I overdid everything on my 50th? And by "overdid", I mean too much wine, too much food, too much art, and yet sadly, not a redhead in sight to whisper sweet lies and tell me everything will be okay. Thankfully, I found a simple solution. My soon to be world famous Hangover Noodles. Sure, I'm 59, alone, and my head is still pounding, but at least I have these noodles. And my art.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 & 1/2 to 2 cups of chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce, or more to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 heaping tablespoon of chopped green onion
- 1 serving Japanese somen or ramen noodles
(feel free to use angel hair pasta in a pinch)
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- (Optional) vegetable of choice (I like bok choy)
- (Optional) 1 poached egg

DIRECTIONS

Combine the soy sauce, sugar, and green onion in the bowl you plan to eat from, then set it aside.

Next, heat the chicken stock in a small pot until boiling. At the same time, bring a pot of water to a boil, and cook your noodles according to the instructions.

(Optional) If you want to add additional greens or an egg to your noodles, you can quickly blanch the vegetables and poach the egg in the chicken stock while the noodles cook.

Finally, pour the chicken stock (with vegetables if you've added them) into your bowl. Stir to mix well, then transfer the noodles to your bowl, and top with the egg if you've gone that route.

To serve, drizzle with sesame oil, then dig in.

...

*I play this drinking game where every
time I pour myself a glass of wine, I drink it.*



So, the starving artist/blogger/trainwreck more popularly know as Ed survived this year's string of Christmas and holiday parties, along with the seemingly endless supply of chit chat, sweets, and finger foods that came with them. That said, if I see or taste another tiny triangular sandwich, ornament shaped sugar cookie, or slice of pie any time soon, my sanity will be in serious jeopardy. I need some quiet studio time, accompanied by a solid dose of real, hearty, flavorful food. Sounds like the perfect excuse for Oxtail Stew. And a bottle or two of wine.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 & 1/2 - 2 pounds of oxtail
- 1/2 medium yellow onion, diced large
- 1/2 medium red onion, diced large
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 carrot, sliced
- 1 celery stalk, sliced
- 1 medium potato, diced
- 4-5 cups beef broth
- 12 ounces of Guinness Stout beer
- 1 cup fresh green beans, sliced in half
- Salt & pepper

DIRECTIONS

Begin by heavily seasoning the oxtails with salt and pepper, then brown on all sides. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the onions, carrots, and celery to the pot, and cook over medium high heat for about 5 minutes, stirring regularly.

Next, add in the garlic and potato, and continue to cook to soften the garlic, about another 3-5 minutes. If the pan seems to get dry, add drizzle of olive oil.

Now, deglaze the pan by pouring in 1 cup of broth, and using a wooden spoon, scrap up any bits from the bottom of the pan. Place the oxtail back into the pot, add in the beer, then add enough broth to cover all the vegetables and meat.

Cover the pan and let the stew simmer for 4-6 hours. When the meat falls off the bone, it's ready. Remove the oxtail from the stew, carefully peel off the meat into chunks, then place the meat back in the stew.

Simmer the stew with the lid off for 20 minutes to thicken the stew, then add in the green beans and cook for another 5-10. Taste for seasoning, add in more salt and pepper as needed.

...

*These days, I have one goal in life.
To be the reason a woman shaves her legs.*

The life of the Starving Artist is often one of chaos. It moves in fits and starts but you adjust, and if you're smart, you make the best of it. Take for instance the weekend art binge.

Here's how it works...

The wallet is feeling a little lighter than usual, so when you hear a coworker can't make his usual Saturday shift at the restaurant, you volunteer to fill in. You tell yourself, "It's OK. I'll put in a few hours during lunch, pocket \$2.35 an hour – plus tips – skate out around 4:00, and maybe have an extra \$75.00 or so for my efforts. Not a bad Saturday, and I'll still have time to do laundry."

So you get up early, head to the restaurant, get the place whipped into shape and ready for the general public, only to find your coworker unexpectedly shows up after all. Now you have a decision to make. What to do? If you're a starving artist, you celebrate serendipity, clock out with an extra \$2.35 in your pocket, and head straight for the liquor store. Your day has suddenly shifted gears. By noon you have four nice bottles of wine on hand, an interesting idea for a new direction on a print, and unexpected motivation.

Let the art binge begin!

...

Saturday, August 29, 7:45 p.m. I've got a bottle of wine in me, I've stretched a fresh sheet of hot press, and I've laid down the first layer of a new print. If this experiment goes as planned, I'll end up with a sweet print using nothing but black, one layer laid on top of another, to create a shadowy, dense mass of confusion that draws you in the longer you contemplate it. Much like my life.

Saturday, August 29, 9:41 p.m. Plate 2 of my black-on-black experiment is now on paper. I'll keep on keeping on as long as the wine holds out.

Saturday, August 29, 11:11 p.m. Plate 3 is down, things are beginning to take shape, I still have two bottles of wine, and I really like how this print is evolving.

Sunday, August 30, 12:39 a.m. Plate 4 is a subtle addition. Once the wine starts to hit full bloom, I try to take baby steps. Then again, if I screw this up, it certainly won't be the first time.

Sunday, August 30, 2:18 a.m. Well, crap. Plate 5 has been applied, but I've almost run out of energy, and more importantly, I'm down to my last bottle of wine.

Sunday, August 30, 5:07 a.m. As I get closer to the end, my steps have become smaller and more tentative. Plates 6, 7, and 8 are small and incremental. Temperance is the word now. With the print, not the wine.

Sunday, August 30, 6:42 a.m. The sun is rising, I'm out of wine, I need a shower, and this new black-on-black path is leading me in a direction worth more exploration. Thus ends the art binge. And by the way, while the wallet is thinner than it was 24 hours ago, it was worth every penny.

...

I snuck a peak at my shrink's notepad after we discussed my ex-wife, and it was just a page full of dollar signs.



If there's one thing I've learned in pursuing an artist's life, it's that big successes are few and far between, so you'd better find comfort in the simple things. The quiet satisfaction of a well stretched canvas. The growing excitement as a new idea emerges. The pleasant surprise when a mistake takes a piece in an unexpected direction. And the comfort of a simple snack. These Sweet & Savory Spiced Cashews are one of my favorite simple things, and I'd bet my best brush you'll like them too.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper flakes
- 2 cups salted cashews

DIRECTIONS

Mix the first six ingredients together in a bowl. Add the cashews and toss to fully coat with the spice mixture.

Heat a medium sized non-stick pan over medium to medium-low heat. Add the cashews and heat them just until the spices become fragrant. Remove from the heat and spread them in an even layer on some parchment paper. Once cooled, store in a resealable bag or jar.

NOTES

I used salted cashews, so if you use unsalted ones, you'll want to add some salt to the spice mixture. Start with 1 teaspoon - you can always salt them more after you remove them from the pan.

Be careful when heating the cashews in the pan, as the spices can burn easily. Don't worry if you get a few black spots – that's just more flavor – but be careful not to push things too far.

The honey will be a little sticky after you remove the nuts from the heat, so be sure to spread them out so they don't get clumped together.

I generally double this recipe when I make it. That way I have cashews all week long.

...

My favorite part of a relationship is the very beginning when I'm still telling myself, "This time I won't end up in therapy."

banana bread oatmeal breakfast cookie



The Starving Artist is now 27 days into his no meat Lenten fast, and while successful so far, I have a suggestion for anyone thinking of following in my footsteps: “Ask your doctor if giving up meat is right for you.” As those ever present drug commercials endlessly warn us, I’ve experienced some unexpected side effects, the most surprising being a nearly irresistible craving for sweets. I’ve never really had a sweet tooth, but now it seems I can smell sugar from a block away. Add to that a sudden, unexpected urge to eat breakfast, and my usual cup of coffee – or the occasional bowl of oatmeal – no longer hits the mark. In my desperation to satisfy these cravings, I came up with what I hope is a healthy – and sweet – solution. The Banana Bread Oatmeal Breakfast Cookie. Oh yeah, I almost forgot. It also has chocolate chips. Enjoy.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup instant oats
- 3/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 & 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 cup mashed banana
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup agave, honey, or maple syrup
- 2 & 1/2 tablespoons regular semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 & 1/2 - 2 tablespoons miniature semisweet chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together the oats, flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the butter, mashed banana, and vanilla, then stir in the agave.

Next, combine the wet and dry ingredients, stirring until just incorporated, then fold in all of the regular sized chocolate chips, then add 1 tablespoon of the miniature chocolate chips.

Finally, scoop the cookie dough into 8 equal sized portions on the prepared baking sheet, and flatten each slightly. Press the remaining miniature chocolate chips into the tops of each cookie. Bake for 13-15 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack.

...

*I'm smart enough to know when
"whom" should be used, and dumb
enough to scoff every time I hear it.*



Allow me to introduce Birdy, the heart and soul of the studio. Without her, nothing much would be accomplished around here. When she bounds up the stairs and into the studio, all spirits are lifted, and motivation fills the room. OK, well... maybe she doesn't exactly "bound". She is 14 after all And those fragile back hips usually beg for a trip up the freight elevator. But she's a real motivator. The way she sprawls out on the floor - completely and utterly indifferent to the endless hours of work being done - seriously motivates an artist to step things up a bit. If you can impress Birdy, you've accomplished something big. Anyhow. Everyone, this is Birdy. Birdy, this is everyone.

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