

## LAST COURSE

Every morning, just before the kids come down to eat their breakfast, I pour myself a cup of coffee and set an intention for the day. There is something about the heat radiating from the mug and warming your hands that is grounding. The smell of dark roast awakens the senses. The first cup of coffee is a full-bodied experience.

I settle into the corner of my dining room where the light falls into the corner and take a self-portrait, often obscuring my face with flowers, my hands, or a cleverly placed shadow. As a black woman, it's important for me to exercise agency over my image; to choose how I want to be seen by others in the world. This series is a creative practice turned ritual that is my way of connecting to the present moment, seeing the ordinary in extraordinary ways, and expressing gratitude.

— ALISHA SOMMER, *photographer and writer*



## **GRAVY**

Gravy is a publication of the Southern Foodways Alliance, an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

The SFA documents, studies, and explores the diverse food cultures of the changing American South. Our work sets a welcome table where all may consider our history and our future in a spirit of respect and reconciliation.

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